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A RECORD OF THE PYRAMIDS.

BY

JOHN EDMUND READE.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ITALY:

In Six Cantos, with Historical and Classical Notes.

"ITALY is a work of great magnitude; exhibiting the power, no less than the courage of a poet conscious of his strength. Its reflective passages have a rhetorical pomp and power of diction, which enchain the fancy while they address the thought."—*The Monthly Chronicle.*

"This Poem of *Italy* may justly be described as the noblest poem that has appeared since the *Childe Harold.*"—*The Literary Gazette.*

ALSO, IN OCTAVO,

THE DELUGE.

"It would be difficult to find any poem in our contemporary poetry (to say the least) that is at once more high and holy in feeling, more appropriate in character, more lofty, yet sustained, in its style, than the Drama of '*The Deluge.*'"—*The New Monthly Magazine.*

CATILINE:

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

"This is the only Roman tragedy of our day."—*Literary Gazette.*

"It abounds with passages of power and dramatic effects; it has passion, and suffering, and genuine emotion."—*Examiner.*

"*Catiline*, from first to last, possesses a fiery energy of style and character that bears away the reader. On the stage, it wants but the genius of a Macready to fix its character as a standard piece. The poetry, enforcing, be it noted well, the soundest moral axioms, is in full keeping with its loftily-finished scenes."—*Monthly Review.*

THE DRAMA OF A LIFE.

"The chief personage in the Drama is one that exists in real life, the moral influences of which are powerfully drawn; the scenes may be said to teem with thought, embracing the finest moral axioms: the character of Lillian is exquisitely conceived and embodied."—*Literary Gazette.*

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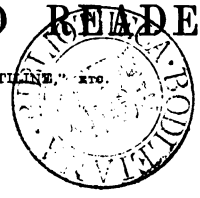
RECORD OF THE PYRAMIDS:

A Drama, in Ten Scenes.

BY

JOHN EDMUND READE,

AUTHOR OF "ITALY," "CATILINE," ETC.



"VITAM IMPENDERE VERO."

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

MDCCCXLII.

1059.

BATH:

PRINTED BY GEORGE WOOD AND SONS.

TO THE

RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.,

FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, ETC., ETC., ETC.

SIR,

LORD BACON has said, that "books should have no patrons but truth and reason;" but he adds, immediately afterwards, that, "if dedicated to any great person, it should be such as the subject suited."

I was hesitating in what form I should commence my Dedication of the Drama to you, when this passage met my eye and confirmed me. I do conceive, then, that the subject of this Poem is peculiarly suited to you in your present transcendent position; for the chief character therein depicted is that of a patriot whose principles and character remain unchanged and unshaken through every reverse of fortune. I believe, also, that among those who are most opposed to you there does not exist one who ever questioned your personal disinterestedness or abstract love of your country.

The practical truths and opinions everywhere inculcated throughout the Drama require no apology. I am convinced they are such as will not only meet your coincidence and approbation, but that of every lover of truth and of his kind.

Your acceptation of my Dedication of the Poem of Italy to you was an earnest of the success which it finally attained, thus ratifying your expressed opinion of it;—a success which, I trust, and fully believe, will be further confirmed by time. Perhaps your accordance of the same honour to the present Drama may entail on it, also, the like auspices.

I have the honour to remain,

SIR,

With the highest sentiments of respect,

Your obliged Servant,

JOHN EDMUND READE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AMASIS, KING OF EGYPT

PROMETHEUS

EPIMETHEUS, HIS BROTHER

CHIEF HIEROPHANT

SEGED, A VETERAN SOLDIER.

Nubians, Babylonians, Memphians, Guards, &c.

LILIS, THE DAUGHTER OF AMASIS.

The Scene of the Drama is laid between Memphis and the Pyramids; the time of action being three days.

PREFACE.

MANY years have elapsed since I first conceived the idea of abstracting the character of Prometheus from the grand ideal in which he lived and was surrounded, and bringing him within the pale of humanity;—of embodying him, not only as a human being, feeling and sympathizing with humanity in the abstract, but practically labouring for the welfare of his fellow-men; descending among them; sharing their common sympathies and oppressions; and, finally, inspiring them, prostrated and become inert in their torpid slavery, with the fire of Liberty—the interpretation, doubtless, of the real flame designated in the fable as brought down or stolen from heaven.

Among the theories of a more extravagant nature, it has been asserted that Prometheus was merely the first man-cook, teaching mankind the culinary arts; while a German editor of Æschylus (Schutz) labours to prove that Prometheus, in his life of penance and

A RECORD OF THE PYRAMIDS.

BY

JOHN EDMUND READE.

climate by mankind, however restricted by the influences of power, opinion, and government. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, having been familiar to the Egyptians, although hidden by the priesthood under many veils from the common eye, is naturally alluded to in the Drama.

The Prometheus of Æschylus ranks not only among the loftiest, but is also the most purely intellectual poem in the world. In the spectacle of intellectual energy defying and triumphing over the might of Nature, exhibited in the agony of bodily suffering, a sense of moral grandeur is conveyed to us that cannot be surpassed. If the end of tragedy be to elevate the soul, and to teach it a calm endurance under all affliction, supported by hopeful anticipation, then does the Drama of Prometheus more powerfully illustrate that sublime sentiment than any composition left to us by antiquity. The sublime is maintained therein from the first to the last scene, where, during the descending fires of the Oppressor, it reaches its acmè. This grand picture of morality represents but one prominent figure, to whom all others are accessories; even Strength and Force are made subjective ministers. Prometheus is the incarnation of a human being whose consciousness of an immortal nature and of a higher futurity teaches him to rise above his mortal sufferings: he is a martyr to the cause of

humanity, and the prophet of a future Pisgah good—which every great man is, living as well as dying: seeing also and feeling the power of that Destiny, or inevitable tendency of events, by which all, even the Oppressor himself, was influenced.

The sense, or rather the presence of an irrevocable Destiny lowering over the background in the picture of Æschylus, imparts, doubtless, an additional shadow of sublimity to the whole; a belief, however, not only utterly rejected, but laughed to scorn, more especially in our modern day of a more transcendental philosophy, when the human mind feels and knows itself to be [a knowledge drawn more from its innate consciousness than from any modes of reasoning *à priori*] something beyond a mere tool of mechanism;—a spark —a scintillation from the all-ineffable Being who, to judge, far less condemn, his creatures, must leave their thoughts and actions as free as those of their Archetype.

The more I dwelt on the truth and the practicabilities of my conception, the more I found it natural and just: I applied myself with ardour to my task, and wrote down that which had already passed so clearly before my mind. The Drama lay by me in its finished state many years; during which interval, my visit to the South opened views which, for awhile, wholly diverted my mind into other channels.

During my long sojourn in Italy, I saw and felt how much of what was true and pure in Art, as well as Nature, was either left altogether untouched (as the whole region of Naples, Pompeii, &c., with its wonders), or touched too often—for the truth will ever be heard in the end—with an undue colouring. Even in the most noted sculptures, the manifold moral truths so sublimely inculcated by the silent artist were overlooked; the outward material signs only, immortally preserved.

On my return, I published my long-laboured Poem of "Italy." I had been aware, in common with my poet brethren, that Poetry, in its highest walk, had become extinct, or, in other words, out of date, and its altar altogether desecrated; that even the advantages of criticism were neutralised; its daily habit of pandering to the suggestions of friendship or instigations of spleen, having rendered its aids useless; the voices of the more discerning were drowned in the blazonries of the puffer; the heralds had been untrue to their vocation; the Public had been too often deceived, and the most extravagant praise or censure operated with the like effect.

In addition to these discouraging circumstances, I was also fully conscious of the unpopularity of my attempt, which I felt my Preface, however openly expressed,

could not effectually dissipate. I was also prepared for the prejudice which would, at once, condemn, without even partially reading, far less dwelling on, that which had cost me such time and labour of thought to erect. Living, also, in comparative seclusion from literary men, I had not a single supporter, or, in other words, one literary friend; still, in despite of all these difficulties, I resolved to publish my book. I knew the reality of the truths which I had embodied: I felt that I was supported by them; that they would live of themselves as such, if once recorded in print and heard among the few. I was careful, therefore—perhaps too careful, in the excitability of the hour—that it should be made known to the few lovers of Poetry, for I had the fear of undue criticism before my eyes. I believed in its influences, if exerted for good or evil; as if really the most extravagant praise or censure could eventually operate, in the least degree, in elevating or debasing that which, if once heard and recorded, is sure to rise to its proper level. I did not pause to reflect that nothing, in itself true, was ever written down: or that nothing insincere was ever made to live beyond the hour. I then receded from all further effort, and returned to my seclusion, as quietly confident of results as if they had already happened. I heard, in due time, or saw recorded, the verdicts of men whose opinions far more than compensated to me for any material loss which I might have

sustained; men whom I knew not, and never may know: the voices of the "fit audience, though indeed few," had arrived to me, and I was more than satisfied.

Since that period, I have lived—I am thankful to reflect—to revise and compress the Poem, availing myself of many hints, not the least valuable of which came from the excellent Southey. I have deposited it with my other works, for what, I have no doubt, will be their posthumous publication; but, had I written nothing else, I should feel, while dying, that I had not lived in vain. I then published "The Deluge," with a similar success. "Catiline," I hoped, and do yet believe, to see on the stage, perhaps under the masterly direction of Macready. In "The Drama of a Life," I minutely developed a character more common in the higher walks of life than is generally imagined; but its funestal moral influences were never before, I believe, held up by the poet or moralist. In these last publications, however, so aware was I of the inutility of advertisement, that I strictly confined each publication within the bounds of private circulation. I have omitted to speak of the drama of "Cain the Wanderer," first published in 1829, though composed some years previously. It was published anonymously, and, though roughly finished, yet sold more (to use the trade term) than any of my recent publications. A second edition

was required, when an article, severely but justly expressed, on its unfinished state, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, determined me to withhold, until I had fully revised the Drama: it therefore remained with me, undergoing no further publication. The dramatic Poem of "A Record of the Pyramids" now follows them; being the last I shall lay on the altar of Poetry for some years. The interval will be devoted to a more elaborate poem, in blank verse, illustrative of the feelings and passions of the day—"The Confessions of the Pastor"—a few sketches from which appeared in the *Monthly Chronicle* of 1841.

If any one should inquire to what effect I have communicated this gratuitous information, my answer is so simple and obvious, that it must disarm all reproof, if it does not conciliate ill-will. I merely desire here to make a record of works—of various essays towards various truths—all inefficiently expressed, doubtless; for whenever was the infinite mind of man satisfied with his more material records?—poems so little known beyond the few, that they may almost be termed the advertisements of unpublished works. I therefore record them here, as having been, and to be, I trust and believe, again as generally as they are now partially known.

The unpopularity of my works, however, was but

a natural consequence of the line of tendency which I pursued; all that I had written being in direct opposition to the public taste, in contradiction to the spirit of the age, which, in despite of its religious discussions, verging too often upon fanaticism, has well been termed an age of unbelief. The moral effects of certain operating causes upon the highest orders of literature have been so clearly expressed by a writer in Blackwood's standard periodical, that I cannot resist quoting them here, only regretting the writer is anonymous:

"'In the infancy of a nation,' says Bacon, 'arms do prevail; in its manhood, arms and learning, for a short season; in its decline, commerce and the mechanical arts.'

"The application of energy, talent, and industry, to material purposes, however useful or necessary those purposes may be, savours of the *physical* necessities, not the *spiritual* dignity of man; and the general turning of public effort in that direction is a symptom of the decline of nations.

"Let us not, therefore, lay the flattering unction to our souls, that the craving for the excitement of fiction, or the realities of mechanical improvement, which have extended so immensely among us, with the spread of knowledge among the middle and working classes, are to prove any antidote to the decline of the highest class of literature among us. On the contrary, they are among the most powerful causes which produce it.

"Real genius and intellect of the highest character, it can never be too often repeated, works only for the future; it rarely produces any impression, or brings in any reward whatever, at the present.

* * * * *

"Those that instruct and improve, destined to a yet longer existence, have a much slower growth, and often do not come to maturity till after the death of the author."

I will confess, however, there have been times when a sense of mental depression has come over me, while reflecting on the confined effects I had made; but, feeling their unworthiness, these failings, more the result, perhaps, of physical than of moral irritability, have long been subdued. I remembered the many who had toiled out their hearts and lives apparently in vain, who yet were always heard in the end. One of the wisest men of his age made an observation, whose profound truth our day of false and often unhealthy excitement illustrates well—"Common popularity is seldom just. I am mistaken, if, among writers of my time, the worst are not those who have gained most applause." Who now remembers one of them—but when will the truths, the sound common sense of Montaigne be forgotten? I might turn homeward and cite too numerous examples. But the true poet, who is the prophet of truth, as well as the priest of Nature, will never despair; the fountains of hope, and goodness, and love, are evermore welling up in his heart; and, however cheerless may be his path in life, his faith will ever bear him unfalteringly on. The sense of the duty of his mission will lay on him with the obligation of a moral law. He will see, in the familiar forms of Nature round him, the symbols and the vesture of God—"the divine idea" of the universe made manifest.* He has only to walk among his

* This "idea," which, revived by Fichte, has been much dwelt on

fellow-men, whether among the smoke of cities, or of villages, or on the hills, to find the true sources of a thousand dormant sympathies within him. Well, indeed, has the poet said—"The proper study of mankind is man;" that of Nature, in her loveliest or sublimest forms, is adjunctive only. Grand and mighty as is the earth, and mightier as are its starry harmonies surrounding, it is but the stage of life:—Man is the drama and the actor. If the poet cannot improve his intellectual faculties while mixing in the lower walks of life, and listening to their records, he will attain other and higher ends. His pride of mind

by the German school, is, however, anything but original. I mention this the more, as his doctrine has been much alluded to by Thomas Carlyle, a writer who will rank among the very first of his age when he has leisure to render his more recondite works into the vernacular; his admirable Lives, at all events, will be enduring records that he could have done so had he desired it. To return—Proclus, on Plato, observes—"If the Deity, in fabricating the universe, operated essentially, he must fabricate the universe as an image of himself; this being, he carries in himself, in the manner of an exemplar, the causes of the universe—and these causes are his *ideas*." Again, more expressly, Plato himself—"The visible forms of sensible objects which should awaken contemplation in us are, or were, *ideas*, or real beings, *ὄντως ὄντα*, subsisting also in the Divine mind, as his patterns or archetypes, and flowing from thence, to give forms to sensible objects." "The ancients," observes Schlegel, "have said everything before us. He who confesses any higher tradition of truth is following in the footsteps of Plato; while those who adopt the course of reason and experience, will find it impossible to progress further than Aristotle has done: each in his own way is unrivalled."

And here I am careful to remark, that Plato's intimations of immortality—his remembrances of a more lofty and intellectual existence—a dark recollection of divinity and perfection within us, however grateful to our human pride, vanishes into thin air when the steadfast eyes of common sense are fixed upon the phantom. Our origin and end are too plainly forced on our understandings by material Nature; our

(if he have such) will be insensibly chastened down and rebuked in seeing the accidents to which all humanity alike is liable; and which, at any hour, may equally affect himself: while a train of infinitely more healthful sympathies will be excited within him by dwelling on the real and the true, placed in their living lineaments before his eyes, than if he had vainly wasted his sensibilities in the presence of stony solitudes, of barren rocks, and echoless mountains.

The impressions thus made by a direct experience of humanity in its phases of suffering and endurance

growth, decline, and fall, are too powerfully marked to us to be disguised by a flattering fiction; the melancholy, yet just justice (if I may so speak) is too clearly shewn to us, doubtless to mortify that pride which we are all of us too prone to encourage.

It is *not*, as Plato says, that the old recollections of the soul are refreshed whenever we perceive a resemblance to the Godhead in the manifestations of external Nature, which are indeed symbols of the highest perfection; but that the faculties of the soul are awakened, being innate, but, lying dormant, and folded up as the bud within the flower, awaiting, from the commencement of time, the hour and opportunity to burst into development. At the same time, following again Plato, the love of the Beautiful *does* fill us with an awe and reverence which belong not only to the beautiful itself, but to that unseen Original of which material beauty is the type.

It is we who elevate, purify, and rarify our beings by our will; emancipating ourselves, with greatest effort, from the bond of our natural sensualism; until, at length, we *attain* that height from which Plato represents us as having fallen. We have run our race of progression—and what else has life been, or shall be, through infinite duration? We have toiled and laboured for heights to which, at best, we only dare aspire.

Plato also considers all knowledge of the Godhead and of divine things to be derived from higher sources: this, indeed (wherein he will be joined by the believer in Revelation), is the distinguishing characteristic of all his philosophy.

will be lasting, and cannot fail to influence the action of the Poet upon his age. He will, thus instructed, stamp upon his works the vital features of universal life; perhaps, also, he may descend to the familiar use of a more prosaic diction as the safe interpreter of the prosaic elements of his subjects. But he will still exercise his poetical function in tracing upwards to Divinity the sublime destinies of man; and here his kindled imagination will supply him with language of a corresponding richness and imagerial beauty, elevating himself and his listeners above their ordinary nature, until they become conscious of a loftier capacity than they had ever felt within themselves before. And this consciousness is the prophecy of Poetry, gathered from the past and the future; an almost sacred attribute, filling men with a momentary inspiration, even though it expire without being resolved into a definite purpose.

The language really used by men in any stage of feeling and passion is always figurative; and it might be easily shewn that abstract ideas are frequently embodied by men of passionate impulses, even among the lower classes, when in any state of mental excitement. A greater mistake, therefore, cannot be, than to suppose, because the poet uses a correspondent language in depicting similar states of moral or intellectual exultation, he separates himself from the universal sympathies.

If, then, all good poetry be the overflow of powerful feelings—and it is, undoubtedly, nothing else—it seems almost like a contradiction in terms to convey such impressions in inane diction or feeble colours. At the same time, not only is it the art of the poet to avoid, but he is driven to avoid, what is called a traditional poetic diction, as the worst of evils. The true poet *must* use his own colours: he will not descend to borrow—he must paint as he feels.

So far, however, from the language of the poet falling short of that which is uttered by ordinary men under the actual pressure of those passions, I will put it to any reflective man, if the language of all highly-wrought feeling and passionate impulse be not generally confused and vague, and always repetitive. In the storms of the mind the lights of soberer reason are obscured, and its escapes are, as the flashes of lightning, irregular and intermittent. That the greatest of all writers perceived this truth, witness Lear on the night-heath, where the wildest fury of the elements never deters his mind from iterating on the one point of his wrongs; or, in the final parting of Brutus and Cassius, where each, in his grief, mechanically repeats the very words of the other. The extremes of grief and joy meet—they have no varieties.

The poet, on the contrary, looks on, chooses the

darkest or brightest colours, and makes a living picture of the most powerful *points* (as an artist would call them) which came out before vaguely and undefinedly. His province is not merely to describe or imitate passion; this would be weak and slavish: but, while describing, he paints in ardent words, which arise of themselves, that which he has conjured up as a reality from his own feelings and passions—he, in veriest truth, actually becomes that which he has embodied, until his self-identity be lost.

Now herein chiefly consisted the strength of Lord Byron—(for let us dare to be generous to each other). Passing over his tales—which are all, more or less, powerful pieces of untruth—let us turn to the expression of his thoughts and feelings during the storm on the Genevese lake, or on the field of Waterloo. They will endure with their localities. Why? Because they were felt by an ardent temperament, which was driven on the spot to pour forth the "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." *O si sic omnia!* Had he been impelled by the calm passionless idea of merely giving pleasure to his readers—of never projecting his mind beyond *self* (if I may so speak)—of quietly analyzing when he should have felt—how different had been the results!—

. . . . "Si vis me flere,
Primum dolendum sit tibi,"

says the poet of common sense and of all time; a sentiment which the true poet *feels* too deeply to forget. It has been asserted somewhere that Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure. This must have been said, I apprehend, by a man of an unenviable temperament. It would be an insult to the million who read him daily—hourly—for years —for life—(as the writer of this notice, one of the million, has done)—to moot such a question. There is not a page in the works of that spirit-stirring—I had well-nigh said, soul-creating—Master but inspires, refines, or sublimates the mind, far beyond the boundaries of merely passive and complacently-approving pleasure.

Recurring to the original subject, do not all classes of men, once weekly, at least, hear the Bible? and do we not daily hear and see that the greater part of them understand and are thrilled with the transcendent images within, being unaware that it is poetry of the sublimest order? Nothing of homeliness or weakness is manifest there; yet scarcely a chapter that is not figurative to a degree. Oftentimes has the writer of these lines heard the sublimities of Job or of Ecclesiastes quoted by the humblest peasantry in their cottages on the Lansdown hills. The quotations were remembered because—and the argument

is conclusive, because—they elevated them by their grandeur of style, perceived through their naked simplicity; because they thus awed or inspired them; because they were truths, or descriptions of truths, given by the imaginative faculty in its loftiest ascension, under the most impressive types, with a clearness that all could understand. If the position could want further confirmation, let us again turn to the theatre for illustration. I would venture to assert there is scarcely a man in the galleries who is not deeply moved by the soliloquies of Macbeth or Hamlet; because he hears in them awful truths, stamped upon his sluggish memory in illustrative and powerful language.

Thus, then,—following the train of thought to which these reflections lead us,—however far removed be the era in which the poet fixes his subject; however highly-wrought or spiritualized be his language; let him be but clear (discarding as the merest weakness of the mind all vague and metaphysical analyzation, whose very name is contradiction,)—let his strength be but clothed in simplicity—let his own mind be but the reflex in which every other mind can see its sympathies and feelings mirrored, its aspirations responded or anticipated—let him but animate his creations with the passions of living men, as men have been and will be in all ages and through all

time, feeling himself the passions and impulses that urge him to embody them—he may rest assured that, whatever be his present position in public opinion, his day of award must arrive: he has addressed himself as a man to his fellow-men—he has allied himself to general and immutable TRUTH—he will be heard and answered.

I must here add, and I wish it to be clearly understood, that, in offering these remarks, I infer not the remotest allusion to any writer or poet whatsoever, or living or dead. Let each take his own path to the temple of Truth, and "walk on his way rejoicing." I have merely stated, in a cursory way, my own impressions why I think it is the duty of the poet to elevate and refine his readers above their more ordinary and sensual natures, by the truth, the loftiness, and the harmony of his ideas, rather than to descend to the triteness and the iterations of every-day commonplace, conveyed to them with an air of undue and false importance.

To resume the subject:—The poet may, indeed, expend his genius and his sympathies upon work after work, while his words may still remain unheard or unweighed; such has ever been the fate of him, the true Vates, who would instruct as well as elevate,—whose very nature it is to look

beyond the hour. He may stand by, and see the finest and purest truths he has uttered misinterpreted by ignorance, or perverted by malevolence, while others shall receive the fullest applause; but, if he have that true belief within himself (which is neither more nor less than the Spirit of God working within him), so far from despairing, or harbouring little and unworthy feelings, he will rather be pleased in witnessing the success of any fellow-man, by efforts which he would not, or could not, make, in surrendering up his impulses to minister to the overwrought or unhealthy excitements of the hour. He will walk along his own path, supported by the thoughts which have made him the independent, the morally happy being he is become, drawing in all pure and joyful impresses from Nature round him, while carefully mixing with his fellow-beings, in a circle not wide enough to distract, or weaken, or deaden his social sympathies; at the same time, he will stand apart, in the true earnestness and sincerity of his mission, devoting his life to the worship of the good and true, and the study of every-day life expanding before his eyes.

Thus should he be occupied until he dies; and, however baffled or mortified by time or circumstance, who would exchange the existence of such a potentate for all which the poor life around him could bestow?

Whose words endure so long as his whose language is made music by the harmonies acting within him and from around? The patriot, the conqueror, the statesman, even the historian and sage, with his precepts, find, in the records of the poet, their surest memorial, for emphatically has the Muse been termed the daughter of Memory. Even if that "age too late" did arrive, which Milton feared—(an age impossible; poetry, or the imaginative faculty, being innate in man, and forced into birth by the life around, growing, flower-like, from the heart, to the end of all time, supposing the contradiction that duration *could* end)—who could deprive him of the infinite enjoyments he bore while living within himself? of the exquisite sense of delight he daily drank in from the spectacle of the visible universe,—imaged within the human soul as on a glass, and received as the eye receives its light;* of the sympathies he felt towards his fellow-men, and the infinite studies opened to him in the darker revelations of the human soul; above all, of the full sense, or rather consciousness, of immortality he bore within him—which sense it was that impelled him to confess, to share and to communi-

* Thus Solomon:—"The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing; God hath made all things beautiful in their seasons; *also, He hath placed the world in man's heart: yet cannot man find out the work which* God *worketh from the beginning to the end.*" This most profound wisdom has been imitated by Goëthe in his Faust; and, though more feebly expressed, yet constitutes the finest passage in that poem.

cate the thoughts and feelings he could no longer restrain within his own bosom. For, after all, what are the songs of the true poet but proofs of his sincerity? but yearnings toward his fellow-men, to confess to them the thoughts and feelings which they have felt, or could feel—which *he* could not share alone? And who are they, I would ask, who listen to him, who applaud and appreciate?—even those who have felt the same aspirations themselves which they were unpractised to confess, or might, perhaps, have confessed far better. The very loftiest thoughts written down, embodied after long reflection, still spring but from natural associations, and might equally have been won by others, had they also devoted their lives to the same oneness of pursuit.

The true poet makes his reader understand his own wealth by appealing to him for a mutuality of thought and feeling: he is inflated by neither pride nor vanity—"*homo* sum, nihil à me alienum puto," is the motto and principle of his life. It is on the wings of popular breath, or fame (proceeding from those whose natures are of a similar cast), that he is enabled to ascend alone, and become a mark to after-ages.

Never, then, let the poet succumb to the shows and fashions of the passing time; but fulfil the impulses impregnated in him, which came to him

from the Ineffable Being. His, above all others, is a holy mission: to elevate, to purify, to soften his fellow-men, by the expression of thoughts and feelings, dormant but inborn, and implanted in them; these high aims to be effected by a correspondent language, clear and intelligible; to teach to each man and to all their value—that he is "a little lower than the Angels;" the fulfilment of all which is an obligation upon him, a necessity, and a moral law. He is the Priest of Nature, as of Humanity; his life and his confessions must be one and the same.

SCENE I.

" If I am traduced by tongues which neither know
My faculties nor person, yet will be
The chronicles of my doing."
. . . . "'tis the rough brake
That Virtue must go through "

SHAKESPEARE.

A RECORD OF THE PYRAMIDS.

SCENE I.

THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS OPENING ON THE DISTANT VIEW OF MEMPHIS AND THE PYRAMIDS:

PROMETHEUS is discovered gazing on a Statue which is placed in a Recess of the Cavern.

PROMETHEUS.

Lo! it is done; the semblance of a man
Shaped forth from earth, that bears his outward form,
Yea, and his inner heart, which is as cold
As that dull clay that feels not the sun's beams!
Oh! could I draw down from its living fire
One spark to animate a soul within
That lifeless mould, to answer to my own,
To echo back my thoughts, and join with me
In the great work I meditate in vain;
To rouse the flame of freedom through mankind,

To make them know and feel that they are free!
I have, with watchings of long years, and fast,
The senses' penance—for with such alone
Can higher thoughts be reached—communed with Nature,
Till her intelligence replied to me;
And with her offspring, man, held interchange
Of thoughts and feelings understood. I have dwelt
Upon her outward forms, her rocks, and hills,
And gathered from them impresses of strength,
And of resistance, that bow not, like men,
To the caprices of the tyrannous air.
I have watched the trees and flowers, how they flourish,
Protected in the bonds of unity;
And the pure stars have told, like oracles,
That their high fixedness and steadfast will
May be attained by man. But what avail
These barren thoughts, if they lead not to deeds?
They are as baseless as the clouds, till breaking
In the voiced thunder, echoed back by all:
Even so will I descend on that proud city,
That sink of sloth, and slavery, and fear;
I will be heard by them, although forgotten.

Beautiful country, and my own! even now
My heart swells toward thee with a childlike fondness;
And who that looked along those lovely plains
Would deem that aught save Freedom there could dwell?
How tranquilly the gorgeous city lies
Robed in the rich gleams of the setting sun,
Reflecting back its glories! her high domes,
And towers, and groves, all softened in the distance!
While Mœris threads its pure stream through her gates,

Like a bright, glistering snake with mazy folds;
And round her the old Nile his girdle spreads
Of golden sands till lost 'midst the blue hills.

Yea, all is blessèd there save human life:
Behold those Pyramids!—those accursèd heaps
Of black misshapen stone; and those pale slaves,
Those human ants that throng round them in dense
Clusters, like bees around their waxen cells;
Toiling to rear them with a zeal as great
As is their self-abasement. Ants?—*they* store
The wholesome produce in their useful cells
Of hard-earned labour for existence;—these
Rear piles for rottenness and foul corruption;
Tombs for dead kings, who, ere the work be done,
Shall be forgotten; leaving them the records
Of baffled tyranny for ever buried.
Oh! that for one brief moment my will were
Embodied in a power! how would I launch
The thunder from this height, and crush the work
And workmen in their ruins!
How?—my eyes
Deceive me—do I see a human form
Break on my solitude? he climbs the rock,
Yea, takes the pathway leading to my cave.

Enter EPIMETHEUS *(advancing to embrace him).*

My brother!

PROMETHEUS.

Hold!

EPIMETHEUS.

Dost thou not know me?

PROMETHEUS.

Ay,
'Tis therefore that I spurn thee, and wert thou
Aught save my kindred I had slain thee—

EPIMETHEUS.

How?
Hath thy long solitude so warped thy mind,
Thou turnest on thy brother?

PROMETHEUS.

Slave! say, rather,
It hath so purified me from the stains
Of all communion with my fellow men,
That I would not be by their touch profaned,
And least of all by thine. How—dost thou dare
To look on me and call thyself my brother?
Ay, once thou wert so; for a few brief hours,
Then, when we fled, and thou didst swear to follow,
And join with me in the great work of freedom,
Or die together; then, thou wert a man,
With head erect, and brow that but to look on
Was to read deeds of honour! Now, behold
Thyself; thy limbs are cumbered with gilt trappings,
The gauds and floating vestments of a woman.
Thy brow is bound with silk, not steel: thy face
(For to the body doth the mind accord)
Hath changed its character, and is become
To look the lie that daily it expresses.
All thy king's wealth can not remunerate
Thy self-abasement, couldst thou wake to feel it;
Nor could his power inflict just vengeance on thee,
For the self-injuries he hath received.

And dost thou dare to name thyself my kindred?
Away—ere this just hand doth separate
The tie that did unite us.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thou shalt hear me:
I fear thee not: it is thy solitude
Hath made thee savage; man embrutes alone.
Look at this desolate cavern, thy abode.

PROMETHEUS.

What? have not *I* a palace, too? Compare
Our state—his tinsel royalties with mine!
His narrow halls against this throne of Nature,
Whose walls are hills, whose dome, the starry heaven,
Whose statues are the everlasting rocks,
Whose floor, the infinitely teeming ground,
Whose living pillars are the trees of earth,
Bearing up from their ever-nourishing Mother
Her life within their trunks; unfolding it
In infinite forms, and opening a world
Of life as infinite upon the airs!
I look from this, my elevation, feeling
I am a king, more free and unconstrained:
He looks from his low seat, and knows himself
Shut out from Nature as from human hearts,—
The slave—who dares not look within his own!
Which, then, is greater beneath yonder heaven?
Or he, or I?—Even thou dost feel the truth;
Even thou dost feel that he who is the lord
Of his own thoughts—who looks abroad on Nature,

And feels himself a part of what he looks on,
He is the king,—thy king, the commoner!
Who sent thee here?

EPIMETHEUS.

The great king!

PROMETHEUS.

By the gods,
Thy spirit shames to give him utterance,
As if thou knew'st this palace were profaned
By that abhorred sound and thy flattery!
Great—what hath *he* done—say, what benefit
Hath he conferred upon his fellow-man?
Did *he* raise Memphis from the water's bed,
And teach the Nile to do her homage, made
Her bulwark and her safety?—did *he* sink
The deep foundations of yon stream, that is
Immortalized even by the name of Mœris,
Which doth allay the drought when Nile's streams fail?
These are the deeds that magnify one man
Above another: proving that his right
To reign is unalienable: that he
Was chartered for the throne he holds by Nature:
His deeds, his manifold blessings; then, man stamps him
With a divinity that is within him;
For, like the gods, his deeds flowed from the love
He bore toward his brethren; when he dies,
He doth rejoin them in their after-state.
Great?—ay, thy king *is* great, for he hath reared
Pyramids that shall mark his grave when dead,
To make the slaves remember to curse on

The tyrant they detested; a sage deed,
For it will save his body from the vultures,
And hive the priesthood, should the people wake
From their brute superstition. He hath sunk
Egypt so low in bondage, that he is
Great from the very dust of their prostration!

EPIMETHEUS.

The citizens of Memphis honour him;
They are free, and know the value of their freedom:
The soldiers idolize him, for his hand
Is liberal and open to their wants.
The labouring Memphians work at their own will:
The Ethiopian and the Nubian slaves
Are hired, and, as labourers, rewarded.

PROMETHEUS.

Accursèd is that government which leans
For its support upon the soldier's sword!
Its triple pillars should be reared on justice,
On mercy, and the people's reverence,
Whose hearts should be its best and sole protection!
There never yet was tyrant, but he first
Did make or mould them to his will, his tools,
His sharpened tools—to overthrow all props
Which time and law so long had sanctified!
Free!—dar'st thou call the Egyptians free?—is stern
Submission bowing to its bondage, freedom?—
The lowering look that threatens vengeance, waiting
Sullenly till the destined hour arrive?
Or, if they lack these higher, nobler feelings,
(That do as much become free men as they

Had gained the liberty they sigh for—yea,
More, for misfortune lends a holy touch!)
Are they not more embruted as they cease
To feel them? Free!—where are the freemen's voices,
That ought to rise upon the morning air
Up to these heights like a triumphant hymn,
Speaking of joy and busy occupation,
The stir of life and motion? I hear nought:
Day sinks and rises o'er that sullen city
In dull, unmarked progression;—when the sun
Scorches all life to cover, I still see
Those human shoals driven on to their loathed task
With lash and steel, and life still ebbing round
The Pyramid until again renewed!

EPIMETHEUS.

Such works demand some sacrifice: they will
Tell of our Egypt's glory when the names
Of rival nations are forgotten; ay,
Until the world again shall pass away,
As told amid the records of the priests.
Ameliorate their lot, thou dost convert
The happy, thoughtless, and inconsequent slave
Into the jealous, proud, rebellious freeman.
Is it not better to employ them thus,
Than lead them forth to war and homicide?

PROMETHEUS.

War changes men to beasts of prey; the peace
That should give rest, doth make them beasts of burden.
But such are the resources and the fruits

Of states that are upheld by fraud or force.
The people must be worked to keep them active:
The soldiers bribed to make them guard corruption:
The citizens proscribed, to keep them passive.
My brother!—see, I have not forgot the name!—
(Laying his hand on him.)
Faintly thou plead'st the cause of tyranny:
Thy looks that flash from thee do mock thy tongue,
And prove thou art not in thy heart a slave.
(Approaching nearer, and more familiarly.)
Hast thou forgotten how thy brother was
Hunted, as is the wild beast to its den?—
A price set on his head—then, when the priests
Found by his silence, more than words, that he
Had not forgot his kingly origin?
Dost thou remember how thyself didst save me,
And swear to league, and reinstate me on
The tyrant's downfal? or hast thou beheld
The slavery of Egypt and not felt?
And, oh! hast thou forgot—though Amasis,
Conscious of what thou art, has loaded thee
With gauds that do insult thy manhood—he
Usurps the throne of the great Shepherd-Kings,
Our mighty ancestors, who held their state
In open air, when the sun looked on them,
While Egypt gathered round, and heard, and blessed them,
The anointed delegates of heaven? Art thou
So sunk in the slave's soulless apathy,
That thou forgivest him who hath usurped
Our father's throne—erased his memory—
And made thee what thou art? Doth the great shade
Of Mœris never haunt thee?

EPIMETHEUS.

We are watched!
By all the gods there standeth one— *(Drawing.)*

PROMETHEUS.

Forbear!

EPIMETHEUS.

Behold, in yonder niche a human form
Doth stand immoveable, and points toward me,
With look and gesture solemn and severe;
He wears the shape and attitude of Mœris,
Even like his statue in the porch of Memphis.

PROMETHEUS.

Draw nearer—'tis the work of my own hands:
The image of a man: and to remind me
Of what men were, and should be; for an end
Which, brother! thou shouldst know, if worthier.

EPIMETHEUS.

Accursèd be these trappings I have worn,
And doubly cursed the day I put them on!
For, from the moment that a freeman takes
A tyrant's gift, his half of manhood's fled;
Nay, from that hour when I did hesitate
To follow thee, my heart, my heart was gone!
And I was, *then*, the slave I am. *(Kneeling.)* Stern image
Of our great sire, take again the branch
That hath rejoined the lonely scion left
Of our ancestral line! Oh, make me like

My brother!—not in the high mind built up
With thought and watching, and superior
In its own nature—but in deeds; and when
His voice doth say—"Do this!"—let my hand be
The lightning—making the will done when spoken!
(Rushing to his embrace.)
My brother, I am worthier thee!

PROMETHEUS.

Thou art!
The oath is ratified, and we are one.
But wherefore com'st thou—what hath led thee here?

EPIMETHEUS.

A dream that is an augury fulfilled:
And I have been the chosen by the gods
To be its herald; and to make me see,
Yea, feel their wisdom; that we, howsoever
We shape our ends, must work to their high will.
The king hath called the soothsayers together,
To unfold the vision which hath troubled him.

PROMETHEUS.

The wisdom of the land convoked to hear
The offspring of distempered appetite!

EPIMETHEUS.

Hear! He beheld the Pyramid completed;
Its height touched heaven; he sat throned upon
The loftiest of them, crowned, and watched the stars;

For his mind ever seeks futurity.
Then, while all Egypt knelt adoring him,
And while the incense reeked up to the skies,
Borne from a thousand altars, suddenly
An eagle hovered o'er him—stooped—and seized
The crown from off his head; then flew away,
And bore it to the eastern hill—even here.

PROMETHEUS.

Oh, never let us mock the might of dreams!
The gods talk not with us as man with man;
But when the grosser senses are asleep,
The outlets of our prisoning cell closed up,
They hold mysterious commune with the soul,
In clear and solemn vision, not confused
And vague, the offspring of dull appetite,
But which unfold the future, and with truth
Oracular recal to us the past:
They shew us deeds we would forget; they waken
Remorse long buried; they renew again
Dead forms we loved, and make us weep in vain!
Behold, how darkly they hold commune with us,
Pointing through extreme opposites their will,
Even from the bosom of my deadliest foe
Making thy heart their chosen herald, whilst
Embodying what was shadowed in my own!
To waver now were to distrust that hope,
The earnest of great deeds. *I* am that eagle,
Who, from this height, have watched until I could
Descend on that proud city like a storm,
Bearing the avenging thunder on my wings!

EPIMETHEUS.

Thy name, so long forgotten by the priests,
Is still endeared among the people; they
Look back, remembering thy mighty sires;
Thy life ascetic is well known; vague rumour
Hath magnified thy skill in herbs and plants,
As the interpreter of signs in heaven
And on the earth:—This Amasis hath heard
And sent—

PROMETHEUS.

No more: the past is all forgotten.
I come, and will interpret his dream to him!
He calls me, as doth heaven, and shall be heard.
I will shew him the eagle he doth dread;
My heart, even now, swells up to bursting, filled
With the great spirit of this enterprise;
For on it hangs the liberty of Egypt!

EPIMETHEUS.

The greatness of the attempt engenders fear.

PROMETHEUS.

Nothing is terrible but fear itself!
The heart doth crush the phantom it creates
By the o'erruling potentate—the will.
—Farewell, great Nature! for awhile;—I have talked
With thee upon these mountain heights, where thou
Dwellest alone with heaven and with the stars,
As with a friend; and from thy oracles

I learned the truths I go to teach mankind.
But when my task is done—I will return
To thee, great parent! thy adopted son;
Feeling that I revere myself the more.
For I shall stand before thee, then, as one
That hath fulfilled the oath he swore to thee;
Who purified his heart upon thy shrine,
And bore down from it to his fellow-men
The flame of Liberty, that, lit by heaven,
Burns pure and ever quenchless there!

(He raises the image, and envelopes it within the foldings of his robe.)

EPIMETHEUS.

Say, why
Dost thou bear hence the image?

PROMETHEUS.

Follow me!

(Exeunt down the precipice.)

SCENE II.

"It is the mind that makes the body rich;
And, as the sun breaks through the darkest cloud,
So honour peereth in the meanest habit."

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE II.

THE PYRAMIDS.—*Memphis in the distance; tribes of various Nations are discovered at work around them. In the front ground, groups of Egyptians, Nubians, and Ethiopians, are gathered together.*

SEGED.

THE sun is sloping off this eastern side:
The prefects are upon the other, rousing
The slaves whom they find sleeping, spent with toil
And heat; or, happier, who may be released,
By death, from their relentless torturers.
We may here breathe for moments.

NUBIAN.

To spend them
In curses deep as is our bondage on
The tyrant who oppresseth us.

SEGED.

Peace, peace!
Discontent is the infirmity of will,

The sickly moanings of a mind diseased,
Made impotent even by its own inaction!
Arouse, and that will, like a conqueror,
Shall drag them bound beneath its chariot wheels.
Hear the rough truth—dare listen to your souls!
The gods look only on self-helping men;
The gods love them—because—their tyrants hate:
Have ye not heard, "to him, the persevering,
The immortal powers come swiftly"?*

EGYPTIAN.

But say, how
Shall we be free?

SEGED.

Watch opportunity!
Meanwhile, like others, yield to circumstance;
For we are slaves and servants, all of us:
Nobles to kings—and they to fate and death;
Lovers to love; the rich man to his gold;
Misers to avarice;—who from chains is free?
We are all prisoners,—the world's a prison;
The air, so charterless, is caved at last;
The sea is mountain-walled, and, where rock-opened,
Is girthed by ropes of sand; nay, azure heaven,
Yon infinite ether, with its sun and moon,
Hath boundaries known but to the God alone!
Were life a curse, it could not be endured;
If happy, unendured were still its loss:

* Saying of Zoroaster.

The one extreme but meets the other;—cease.
The wise are silent before those in power:
To praise, were flattery; to speak the truth,
As dangerous as useless, should they hear;
And 'tis the coward's most peculiar mark
To vilify them, dead. The scales of justice,
Here or hereafter, are poised equally.
Distinctions end in death: the high and low
Alike return through the dark gates of life,
As impotent as when they entered them;
Their pride of place is over, and they are
Levelled to Nature's great equality.
They had their luxuries and disease,—we, health
And poverty; they sickened,—we enjoyed;
They lived in fear and doubt,—and we in hope;
They never felt the pure and vigorous flow
Of uncorrupted blood,—we never knew
The dull, clogged sense of brute satiety:
Do ye not *feel* the justice of the gods?
See ye not thus the balance poised of Nature?

NUBIAN.

We seek but to be happier;—even labour
Were welcome, so it were tempered with repose:
We ask but to ameliorate our lot.

SEGED.

'Tis necessary for man to be happy:
It is the aim of every human being;
The first desire impressed on us by Nature;
The last—which only leaves us in the grave.

But where is this same happiness? who knows it?
All search—none find—life wastes in the pursuit;
Death reaches us, and still it is unreached!
So common men and kings are equal; yea,
Both in their death and life: for, to the one,
Health was accorded, and a blameless conscience,
The hut, and the free sunshine; to the other,
Power and unrest, the mountain and the storm:
Both meet at the same gates of Death at last,
Both enter—but with no preëminence.

EGYPTIAN.

Seged! thou art wise, and reverend thy grey hairs:
I do repent that I forgot to ease
Thy daily task.

BABYLONIAN.

And I—

PHŒNICIAN.

And I—

SEGED.

Nay, friends!
I thank ye, but these hands can work, though weak.
They helped to raise the walls of Thebes, yet I
Have lived to see her in decay, and Memphis
Rise on her ruins; if such changes come
In one man's life, what may we hope will last?

EGYPTIAN.

These Pyramids.

SEGED.

Why, ay, they 've room enough;
Their base the shock of earthquakes would survive,
Or of the deluges our Hebrews tell.
The gods have taken care to inspire our kings
To leave us records we shall not forget.
Had Mœris' self built them, they would outlast
Even his great name; but now they will endure,
Our shapeless monuments of slavery.
Oh! that our tyrants there would grave their names
To stamp their shame indelibly with ours!
But this they fear to do, well knowing how
Contempt and hate would nightly blotch them.

EGYPTIAN.

Ay,
Mœris spent not his time in building toys,
In rearing barren rocks, by their own weight
Immoveable; *he* laboured for mankind.
Look at yon Memphis, reared in old Nile's bed;
His lake of never-ebbing waters, where
He and his queen sit on their marble thrones,
Looking the majesty they wore, in stone.

SEGED.

But it was built to be upheld by *men*,
To bring forth men, which, when it fails to do,
Shall perish.

NUBIAN.

How! can Memphis fall?—behold

How she is based! The hill hath turned its course,
To give her room: the waters circle her,
Breasted with triple ramparts, while above
The mountains make a crown for her towered brow.
She is incorporate with Nature.

SEGED.

Yet
Even in my time the Nile hath made some head:
Despite the embankments, and the jealous care
That watcheth him, or the rich offerings made,
He, ever and anon, among the groves
And gilded palaces that hide his banks,
Gives serious token he hath not forgot
His ancient reign, though men have clipped him in.

EGYPTIAN.

I trust the oracle, and that hath said—
"Memphis will stand while she hath men to guard her."

NUBIAN.

And I.

SEGED.

And I—for they were Mœris' borrowed words:
He knew what he had left; he built not walls
To be the shelter nooks of coward fear.
He left them, purposely, a stronghold; weak,
If tenanted by sloth or treachery;
Impregnable while hearts remained to guard her.

NUBIAN.

Let them look to it: they have two enemies
To watch, and both inexorable; Man
And Nature.

EGYPTIAN.

And what people should we fear?

SEGED.

The Persian, who doth watch with jealous eyes,
While burning to redeem his losses.

EGYPTIAN.

Would
That I had seen the sack of their proud Sardis!

SEGED.

I saw it, friend! for Mœris did select me
To bear his conquering banner.

NUBIAN.

Thou!

SEGED.

Even I.
I did not dream of rags and slavery then,
When—I may say it now—this vigorous arm
Would have struck down the man who dared foretell it!
He died on his return, and did confide
His infant twins to Amasis. Thou know'st
The rest: the priests took them, and made him king,
While he gave them the power thou seest here.

NUBIAN.

What! thinkest thou these Pyramids are built
For further end beyond interment?

BABYLONIAN *(approaching mysteriously).*

Hear!
My station is before the southern entrance;
I have seen myriads of workmen enter,
But never one of them have thence returned.

PHŒNICIAN.

Perchance their labours are unfinished.

SEGED.

Friend!
Be satisfied: the outer mark of priesthood
Is set on it; let that suffice. What man
Beyond themselves shall know their mysteries?—
Places for torture, secret passages,
For treasure or concealment, or to make
Their hollow idols speak with their own voices;
Fleecing the rich till they become as needy
As we are. Such hath been, and shall be ever,
Till men look upward, feeling they are men,
Who should address the Deity themselves:
No intermediates between them and Heaven.
Think'st thou these priests would let them go who wrought them?

NUBIAN.

Hist, Seged! if they heard thee speak——

SEGED.

I care not.
Friend—hadst thou lived as many years as I,
And fallen in the world, yet still have buoyed
Thy heart up with one solitary hope,
Weak though it were (hope feeds on anything,
So it be hope); hadst thou beheld that, crushed,
Utterly crushed, thou wouldst care little, then,
What slip or trifle shook thee out of life!

EGYPTIAN.

Thine eyes are wet, old man! tell us, good Seged!
What was the object that thy faithful heart
Clung to so long?

SEGED.

Those boys—the twins of Mœris!
I thought the gods would have protected them
Till they could right themselves with their red hands;
They might have reckoned on all Egypt rising.
The priests spared them, indeed, until one fled—
That shewed some spirit; while the other (gods!
This old heart never will grow cold)—the other
Turned parasite—a courtier—hanging on
The tyrant for his daily bread!

EGYPTIAN.

It seems
Thou hast not heard the news from Memphis?

SEGED.

How?

EGYPTIAN.

That Epimetheus hath fled to his brother,
Whose haunt is hidden still.

SEGED.

Why this looks well,
Yet not enough for hope. The youth's warm heart
Kindles the spark to instant flame, and lives
Upon the fire that it hath raised; the old
Is like the flint, 'tis struck from it with effort,
Relapsing to the coldness of its nature.
I know the boy's a hero—(I forgot
'Tis thirty years since I have seen him);—now
He's in full manhood, when the fruits should come:
And what is he?—Philosopher they call him:
A watcher of the sun, and moon, and stars:
Would that the gods would lend him but a spark
Of their ethereal fire! But, 'tis as well; *(musing)*
He could not rise alone against all Egypt.
'Tis better thus; and yet he might have tried:
A spark will sometimes kindle into flame
When all the train is laid. It would have been
Something, if but to die in the attempt:
He would have left us his great memory.
Far better thus than—

PHŒNICIAN.

Hist! the Prefect comes!

SCENE III.

. "Contention madly hath broke loose,
And bears down all before him."

SHAKESPEARE

SCENE III.

Enter the Chief Prefect, Warriors, and Guards. PROMETHEUS *and* EPIMETHEUS *are seen advancing in the distance.*

PREFECT.

How now, ye slaves! what—stretching in the shade?
Ye give the work to us, ye drones! while ye
Lie doing nothing. Up! the bricks are cooling,
And soon will be unfit for use. I swear,
By all our gods, if, ere the sun doth set,
I see a loiterer, I'll strike him dead.

PROMETHEUS.

Gods! can the human form be so debased?
And, worse, the human mind?

EPIMETHEUS.

My heart doth sicken
At the oppression I behold.

PROMETHEUS.

My brother!
It is the gods' peculiar will that they

Who ape their attributes on earth are blind;
They are hemmed round by tools—their ministers
Of pleasure, and the echoes of their will.
Beyond the circle of their court they see
Nor hear; the people's murmurs reach not there.
Hence the pride hardening their hearts to pangs
They cannot feel; and from this lethargy
They wake not till they are struck down by Death,
The kingly leveller, who bears them where
Their eyes are opened to behold themselves!

EPIMETHEUS.

How stern these look!

PROMETHEUS.

And therefore dangerous.
The discontents of freemen are heard like
Thunder when in the distance, yet not feared;
They give their tyrants warning: 'tis the silence
Of the mute, sullen slave is terrible!
The calm before the hurricane; the winds
Are hushed, till from the bosom of the cloud
The bolt bursts, signal of the tempest, striking
The moment when the flash appears.

EPIMETHEUS.

These men
Have lost all trace of manhood! even their forms
Are stooped to their employments.

PROMETHEUS.

I see one

Among them of a different stamp; a man
In all his inches. Look at him who stands
Apart, preëminent above the rest
In stature and in gait, that gives him height
Superior: how soldier-like he bears him!
His nerves are lashed together, like the cords
Of some storm-beaten vessel; but his form
Is fixed as the gnarled oak with branches torn,
Unstooping in its wintry barrenness!
There is a proud submission in each gesture;
As if he did his occupation honour
In stooping to it; as if his spirit felt
Conscious of the abasement that his body
Yielded—but not his mind.

EPIMETHEUS.

See, how the Prefect
Doth eye him in his pigmy stature, frowning
With angry looks, as the cur eyes the lion;
As if he would not own but felt the scorn
Which that stern brow expresses.

CHIEF PREFECT *(to Seged).*

Slave! thou art
Still heedless: twice hast thou dried up the bricks
By gazing at those strangers: by the gods,
It is the last offence which thou shalt make!
(Unsheathing his falchion.)

PROMETHEUS *(to his brother).*

Forward—and stop the profanation!

EPIMETHEUS *(rushing forward, and wrenching his falchion from him).*

Hold!

Die, dog, in thy damned malice!

(Prefect falls—shouts and confusion—the slaves crowd together. Seged kneels to Prometheus, who withholds him; meanwhile, the whole of the immense multitudes are hurrying from all parts towards the spot.)

PROMETHEUS *(springing on the pediment of the Pyramid).*

Back, and hear me!
Why stare ye thus, Egyptians? Ye *are* so,
If but in name. Where is your spirit fled?—
The fire that glowed within your father's breasts?
Where are the trophies of the conquered nations,
Which, when returning from the battle-field,
They did throw carelessly around them, for
Their women to erect as toys in sport?
Look round ye now—are ye their race?—*their* sons?
Sprung from the loins of those heroic men
Who followed Mœris to the fight, and saw him
Place his mailed foot on necks of conquered kings?
What are ye sunk to now?—slaves, basest slaves!
Look at these giant records of your shame,—
These manifold altars of your slavery!
Millions of hands employed in sterile labours,
On tyrants' caprices; tax and tribute
Scourging ye until done, till ye became,
From suffering, insensate as your tyrants.

But who hath thus degraded ye?—Yourselves!
Ye knelt and gave your crown to an usurper;
Ye made him tread on your officious necks,
When, had ye met him with a freeman's eye,
He would have shrunk back cowering. It is ye
Who first debase yourselves, and so teach men
How to debase ye! Comes not strength from you?
And power, and wealth, the attributes of kings?
Ye hail the golden idol ye set up;
Ye arm it with the sting which goads ye—yet
Ye marvel when it proves its nature. Oh!
That ye could feel within your hearts, or hear
How the gods laugh when they behold one man
Prostrated to another! If ye must
Bow down, be it to Virtue;—for she is
Image of the Divinity who made her!
Ye have no king—your king's a slave! Behold!
(Uncovering the image from his robe)
This clay doth bear the semblance of a man
As ye, and hath as cold a heart. I bring ye
The fire down from heaven to inspire it:
To rouse ye up to emulate the deeds
Of your great fathers—I bring liberty!
Which is not given, but must be born in ye,
And, like the lightning, flash from ye at once,
Annihilating tyranny to dust!
And think not that ye *can* be overcome:
The spirit of the Invincible dwells in ye!
There is the unconquerable born in man
When standing on his birthright's liberties,
The unalienate majesty of right!
Then, by the memory of your fathers' wrongs,—

Then, by the hope of your dear children's rights,
Strike! for the power is poised in your right hands!
Now—ye must do or die!
Behold the image *(striking)*
Of hero-worship that your fathers knelt to,
Worked by these hands! I am great Mœris' son,
Prometheus, of the Titan race!

(Loud and long-continued shouts from the multitude.)

THE PEOPLE.

He lives,
The son of Mœris!—liberty or death!
Down with the tyrant!—on to Memphis!——

EPIMETHEUS.

Hold!
Arrest the Prefects!

PROMETHEUS.

But not slay!—we will
Make our path bloodless;—one triumphal march
To Memphis and the tyrant's throne: no stain
Shall blot the holy wreath of liberty!
Our sacrifice of great thanksgiving offered
The immortal gods shall rise without a sigh
From one great nation's heart! For, oh! we have
Conquered ourselves: we have not bought with blood
Our natural, heaven-stamped birthright!—On to Memphis!
The victory of an hour is nothing: peace,
A lasting peace, can come but from yourselves;
Its solid basework fixed by law alone,
By duty, and triumphant principle.

VOICES FROM THE MULTITUDE.

King—live for ever! let us yoke ourselves
To his triumphal car, and bear him on.

PROMETHEUS.

Hold—said ye not erewhile ye would be free?
Do freemen stoop to aught save the high gods?
Or imitate the offices of brutes?
I am, like ye, a fellow labourer
In this great work; and claim to be your leader
Only because I pointed first the way
That led to the broad path of honour. On!——

EPIMETHEUS.

Dost thou hope, brother, with these unarmed crowds,
Howe'er in resolution panoplied,
To break the serried strength of armies reared
By discipline to battle?—to awake
Confidence in the distrustful public eye,
O'erawed by power, by habitude restrained?
Who look on Innovation but as danger,
Though Peace beside her walked, and Blessing stood,
With Victory by her side? Oh, rather, arm!
And, confident in Justice' triple shield,
Let Valour strike with his protended spear!

PROMETHEUS.

Thus would I act, my brother, looked I not
With a profounder hope and holier faith
Into the vast heart of Humanity,
And found the truths therein that shall deceive not.

There is a sense of justice and of right,
As of an unalienate liberty,
In mankind's bosom fixed immutable.
It may be overborne by circumstance,
O'erruled and stifled,—all but unforgot;
For it lies rooted there as is the oak,
Though by storms shattered or the woodman's hand.
The solitary voice may wake once more
(And that it doth, bear witness this great day)
Its spirit into life; but, when evoked
By thunders of the shouting multitudes,
In tones familiar and with outstretched hands,
Calling on freedom and their fellow-men,
Shall it not have its answer back from them
With a convulsion that shall topple thrones
To their foundations?—Egypt's heart shall answer thee!

THE MULTITUDE.

It doth—we feel we are invincible!

PROMETHEUS.

Ye *are* so in the thought, which is already
Victory ratified by your will. To Memphis!
Onward in triumph!

THE MULTITUDE.

Liberty or death!

(Exeunt the people, in procession, guarding Prometheus in their centre, with shouts and songs of triumph.)

SCENE IV.

"Ha, Majesty! how high thy glory towers
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!"
.
"Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
Draw near them, then, in being merciful;
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge"

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE IV.

MEMPHIS—THE PALACE OF THE KING.

AMASIS *on his throne. Hierophants, Courtiers, Guards, &c.*

CHIEF HIEROPHANT.

THE king is moody.

PREFECT OF THE GUARD.

'Tis his wont, since he
Hath heard the answer of the oracle.
It will be easier to raise pyramids
To touch the stars than pluck the eagle's wing!

AMASIS.

Who whispers?

HIEROPHANT.

Life of Egypt! we did marvel
Where tarries Epimetheus?

AMASIS.

Let his head
Answer on his return. I have watched him long;

And, but I scorned him and his brother-seer,
I would have crushed them in their infancy.
Say, have the slaves gained tidings of his haunt?

HIEROPHANT.

Great king! they have searched hill and dale in vain.

AMASIS.

How! is not this rebellion to my will?
Whenever hath a king of Egypt said—
"Do this," and 'twas not done? Go forth, and arm
My choicest troops; lay waste the country round
With fire and sword; we will wring their confession
From agonies: it may be, that the sage
Will reappear to save his fellow-men.
Hence, on your lives, and see it done!

(Exeunt chief Prefect and the guard.)

The gods
Do ever throw a veil before our eyes,
When taking our first steps to our desires,
Without consulting them; and then withdraw it
When we have gone too far; to make us see,
And feel, too late, what we have done, which is
The punishment inflicted on self-will.
It doth appear like blindness to have spared
Those scions of the old stock: now, they are
Spreading in their full strength, and I, already,
Am darkening beneath their shadow. I
Can not unfold the starry oracles
As once, when I beheld my own ascendant.
Nightly I mount the loftiest Pyramid,
And watch the heavens; but my star is dim,

Though fixed, methinks, of late, or that my eyes
Are weak with watching, or 'tis truth, a mist
Doth gather slowly o'er it and obscure.
At midnight will I offer sacrifice
To the high gods; and, while they reek to heaven,
Observe the aspect of my destiny:
That cannot shake like this uncertainty;
For when we know the worst, we can oppose
Our strength of will to meet and to endure.
Suspense doth paralyze the faculties
Till they succumb without an effort.

(Shouts without. Guard rushes in.)

Slave!

Dar'st thou thus break on——

GUARD.

O king, live for ever!

The enemy is at thy gates; alarm
Is spread through Memphis, and the citizens
Rush everywhere to arms.

AMASIS.

From whence

Doth the storm gather?

GUARD.

From the Pyramids.

AMASIS.

Ha! 'tis rebellion—ho! without!—to arms!

(Clang of arms without, and long cries of "Prometheus!" "Liberty!")

'Tis he! I will essay one effort more;
The powers of habit and of memory
Lie, chainlike, upon man; old saws have weight;
The reverential fear, the veneration
Inborn, of pompous state,—these, more than guards,
Are the true potentates that fence the king;
Checking aggression ere it dare intrude
Behind the veils that shelter majesty!
I may o'erawe the rebels to obedience.

(He reascends his throne.)

(The hall is filled with armed men. Prometheus enters unarmed, accompanied by the choicest warriors and citizens: he advances towards the throne.)

The SOLDIERS *and* CITIZENS *(tumultuously).*

Death to the tyrant!—slay him where he sits!

PROMETHEUS.

Hold! would ye stain your victory to offer
To the high gods so poor a sacrifice?

AMASIS.

Egyptians! and my subjects, if ye are!
And have not, in some maddening trance, forgot
The reverence due to kings and to yourselves!
Wherefore this tumult?—these wild cries? I deemed
The foe had entered Memphis. Are ye turned
Your country's foes? When were the palace-gates
Debarred ye, that ye burst them? Know ye not
I am the anointed majesty of Egypt?
To whom the King of kings hath lent his name
And attributes of power; fountain of honour;

The ward, yea, the embodied arm of Law,
Dispensing life and death? How! feel ye not
Divinity doth compass round my throne,
The overawing power?—that I am
Your safeguard and your tower of strength in peace,
Your shield in war?

PROMETHEUS.

Oh, well dost thou point forth
The studied ritual of old obedience!
The time-worn channel of grey habitude,
Which, Nile-like, hath its overflow. Dar'st thou
Insult our blindness thus, as if we were
The weak, the soulless slaves we have appeared,
And never could be men again? Dar'st thou
Preach wholesome laws to us, who hast forgot
Or trampled on them, human and divine?
Fear not for thy base self: thy doom shall be
Justly—yea, mercifully dealt; to shew thee
That, fallen as we are, we have not yet
Forgotten our humanities.

AMASIS.

And who
Art thou, who, unarmed, and in peasant's garb,
Stand'st there, and lookest down on me as calm
And self-possessed as thou the monarch wert
And I the slave!

PROMETHEUS.

Thou art;—thou know'st thou art!
Thou readest in my eye ascendant mind;
Thou feelest how thy spirit quails before it!

Descend from thy usurpèd seat, and hear,
With me, the judgment of thy fellow men.

EPIMETHEUS.

He stirs not! By the gods, this javelin shall——

PROMETHEUS.

Hold! vengeance is wild justice, and offended
Is the sedate eye of slow-judging Law,
When her high attributes are thus usurped
With most unholy hand. *(To Amasis.)* Descend thy throne!

AMASIS.

Never! the insulted majesty of kings
(Turning to his adherents)
Doth burn within me! Slaves! do but your duty,
The wealth of Egypt shall repay ye: quail not
At their thronged ranks,—a triple tower of strength
Is the king's name!—the greater honour ours
In overthrowing them!
(Unsheathing his falchion, and descending from his throne.)
Behold, *I* lead ye,
The foremost. Courage may defend a crown,—
Infamy never!

THE MULTITUDES.

Down with the tyrant!

(The guards of Amasis, with shouts, throw themselves round him. Ere the onset, the doors of the inner apartments are thrown open: from them Lilis hastily enters, gorgeously attired, followed by her attendant women.)

LILIS.

Save,
Oh, save my father! If that ye be men,—
If ye have hearts, and which have ever felt
The touch of nature,—if the voice of woman
Have e'er appealed to ye, and from the lips
Of your own wives and daughters; hear me now!
My father, speak!—what seek these daring men?
Thy crown?—nay, give it, so they spare thy life.
Lov'st thou not Lilis more than power? and what
Shall I be if I lose thee? On my knees
I charge thee give it them, so they depart.

PROMETHEUS.

Woman! thy words have not preserved his life;
I would have saved it with my own, though he
Is my most mortal foe. If he forgot
He governed *men*, these may be pardoned in
Their triumph for forgetting it themselves.

LILIS.

Who is this strange and fearful man, who stands
Alone and unarmed, when all round him are
Mail-clad and threatening death? He stands as doth
Osiris in the temple.

PROMETHEUS.

I am son
Of Mœris.

LILIS *(hiding her face on her father's breast).*

Oh, my father! thou *art* lost!

PROMETHEUS.

Say, rather, saved; Lilis! if in that breast,
So beautiful, pure Virtue holds her shrine,
As sure she doth; if soft humanity,
And love toward thy human-kind dwells there,
Its hallowed sanctuary; if thou art not
Dead to the pangs of beings like thyself;
If thou hast higher feelings living in thee;—
Thy brow doth shew a pride that answers me!—
Thou wilt shed tears of joy to know they're free;
And, as great Egypt's daughter, thou wilt kindle
To know they won their freedom by themselves,
And spared a tyrant, though it be thy father!

LILIS.

Alas, my father! doth he speak the truth?
Shut up within these walls, hid from all eyes,
I have known nought beyond thy love, and asked
For nothing further. Can the brow that rests
On me with smiles so placid and august,
Become transformed by passion? can the voice,
So fond and so endearing, be the same
That dooms to slavery and death?—oh, no!
It cannot; Egypt cannot seek the life
Which is my own—so are we bound together;
Oh! spare him, spare him!

(Kneeling at the feet of Prometheus. During the interval, the hall is filled with multitudes of armed men.)

King! have mercy—*man!*
Have feeling!

PROMETHEUS *(moved, turning to his warriors).*

Citizens! ye see by this,
None are all evil, though they may appear.
There doth not live on the wide earth a thing,
However foul its nature, that hath not
Something of godlike in it; some faint stamp
Of Him who made: and that would not be mourned
By some lone thing to which it was endeared!
Behold this man, though deaf to human cries,
Or human sufferings, and insensible
To feeling as to honour, yet still holds
One creature on the earth he loves—who loves him!
Yea, clings to him, and from the memories
Of his affections! He hath, then, a touch
Of human softness, and, though closed to us,
Be it remembered in our judgment on him,
And claim a kindred feeling from ourselves.
Daughter!—thy father is no longer king:
This sentence is by justice ratified:
But as a man he shall be safe, nor want
Thy tears to aid him; trust thou in my oath.
(To Epimetheus.)
My brother! lead her to a place of safety,
And whatsoe'er betide on this great day,
Guard her as thy own child till all be done.
(Epimetheus leads her away, followed by her attendants.)
Amasis! droop not, though no longer king,
Keep thou the outer semblance of a man;
Let not men hate thee and despise: descend
Thou mayst—to me.

AMASIS.

And whither?

PROMETHEUS.

To the spot
Where living Freedom burst forth from the grave,
Where thou hadst buried her—the Pyramids.
I say—quail not! Think'st thou I lead assassins?
Let us, bareheaded, standing before heaven,
And listening Egypt hear the award of justice.

THE PEOPLE.

The voice of nations is the voice of justice.

PROMETHEUS.

The voice of justice is the will of heaven!

THE PEOPLE.

On to the Pyramids!

(Flourish of martial music; shouts and clamours heard without; the troops within marshal themselves in silence, led on by Amasis and Prometheus.)

SCENE V.

"Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves: for, if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not."

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE V.

THE PYRAMIDS—*The various tribes of Egypt assembled round them. In the centre of the multitudes rises the pediment of an unfinished Pyramid, now made the Altar of Federation; a fire is kindled on it: Prometheus, clad in white robes, as Hierophant, stands before it; Amasis beside him. In the foreground, groupes of Memphians, Nubians, and Ethiopians, are gathered together.*

NUBIAN.

Now, Seged! what think'st thou of this?

SEGED.

I walk
Like one in dreams, save that I see the things
Before me which I never dared to hope.

PHŒNICIAN.

How glorious of the citizens, to rise
Even to a man!

NUBIAN.

Ay, and shake off the yoke
That fretted them to madness, with a calm,
Yet stern decision: more like men fulfilling
A duty, than exacting retribution.

SEGED.

When they felt freemen they were so; though chained,
Their natures were the same: from hence their calm,
Deliberate valour, feeling well and deeply
Their great and solemn duties held in view.
Had they been slaves by nature, or from will,
They would have seized those moments to plunge in
Wildest excess; for when the soul's debased,
The senses are embruted with it, blind,
From having lost their guide.

EGYPTIAN.

Yea, great is Egypt
On this eventful day!

PHŒNICIAN.

Behold the man
Who kindled up the fire in their hearts!
He mounts the basement of the Pyramid.

SEGED.

What nobler throne has Freedom than when reared
Upon the wrecks of despotism!

EGYPTIAN.

Yea, great
Is Mœris' son! in venerating him
We catch the spirit of his inspirations.

SEGED.

We all would be as he but cannot: he
Is our ideal; looking on him we feel

Our hero-worship natural to man,
To bow to something loftier than himself:
Godlike, and yet below divinity,
While understood: in reverencing him
We pay a homage to ourselves; we feel
Our natures not remotely are allied.
He is the heavenward lightning; we, the fuel,
Wanting the living flame within ourselves.

BABYLONIAN.

But I see not the priesthood.

SEGED.

Rest content;
The holy men would scarcely ratify
The sacrifice of their best hopes upon
Yonder pure altar. They are hid beneath it,
Shrouded, mole-like, within their caverned holes,
Plotting how best they may secure themselves,
And clog our paths yet.

NUBIAN.

May the gods forbid!

EGYPTIAN.

Behold the vast and infinite assemblage,
From the low Pyramid, extending far
As eye can reach; the trees and gilded spires,
And towers far round, are covered with quick life
And expectation.

SEGED.

Yea, a solemn sight!
What countless hosts of jarring creeds and natures

Are joined here in one unity of purpose!
Knit by one mighty heart that sends one feeling
Of thought and will to its extremities!
They stretch to the horizon's line: the sky,
The blue sky—circles round them all: yon sun,
Shrine of the One, doth look upon and bless them!
Their moving is the sound of many waters;
And shouts, at times, rise up like gathering thunder,
Then die amidst the distance: as if one
Mind, heart, and voice, lived there, pervading all.

EGYPTIAN.

Lo! Amasis ascends the pediment,
Crowned; while the patriot doth follow him,
Clad in white robes, as a Hierophant,
When making offerings to his gods. Behold!
He stretcheth forth his hands, as if to speak.

SEGED.

A solitary human voice! no breath
Of which shall die, whose spirit shall not find
An echo from humanity; borne on
And registered by deeds from sire to son
Through generations, when this day, and all
Its records, yea, when Egypt's self, shall sink
Into oblivion's dusty nothingness!

PROMETHEUS.

Egyptians, and my countrymen! and ye
Fragments of nations round me, who will spread
This day's deeds to the farthest ends of earth,
Hear me!—I see a sight that doth inspire

Enthusiasm even in heaven! I see
A mighty people round me joined by one
Vast heart, one breathing unity of will;
Fresh from a deed that shall eternize them.
Awhile they slept: the hand of industry
Despaired; law sold itself to power; the altar
Was pandered to the priest, and he sold heaven.
One impulse moved: a drop the cup o'erflows:
They rose as rises Ocean from his sleep,
Trampling upon their chains, which were of sand.
Oh, ye high band of patriots!—ye asserters
Of the first, noblest attributes of man!
Your unstained hands have done their office; now,
Your minds must ratify what ye have done.
Behold the man ye crowned!—he wears it still:
I do now call upon ye, citizens!
And ask if there be one who will stand forth
And say why Amasis should yet be king?
If there 's a man will swear why he should reign,
And tell what he hath done to prosper Egypt,
I swear by the immortal gods I will
Descend and honour him! The usurpation
Shall be the lauded act of one who knew
What he could do in that great office throned;
Who wrenched from feebler hands the crown away,
To embody his high thoughts in action, moved
By his devotion for his country's good.
Such men have risen, and shall again: they are
The elected by the gods,—the guiding lights
To nations in their darkness,—even as seers
They are raised up to us to guard the truth
Through time's wild fluctuations. I am one

Of these: no fortunate chance, but a design.
I work the good I comprehend not; I
See but the dawnings of the light; I am
Fate's instrument of purpose; so alone
Worthy of standing here. Answer me, nations!
(Pause—a long, unbroken silence.)
Then, as the chosen priest of Liberty,
I do, before the gods, and by the will
Of Egypt told, uncrown thee, Amasis!
Behold, the diadem is in my hands
That stamps the king!

THE PEOPLE *(tumultuously, a movement ensuing among them).*
Place it upon thy head!
Be thou our king!

EPIMETHEUS.
Brother, obey them: how?
See'st thou not how the tumult gathers round?

PROMETHEUS.
Hear me—I will be heard. Oh! let no rash
And headstrong impulse sully this day's deeds,
Bearing away your calm and steadfast reason!
If I had sought this crown, and left my hills
To gratify ambition, I should not
Have called ye here as judges: my own will
Had been my law,—I should have seized the throne
While Amasis bled at my feet. But I
Will have my name untainted by suspicion:
It shall be told of me that I brought down
The fire of liberty from heaven,—the deed

Itself its own reward. I call upon the highest
Judges of Memphis to draw near and hear me.

EGYPTIAN.

Not take the crown—he doth himself the wrong!
Yea, by yon sun! What, Seged!—hear'st thou this?
Or art of hearing as of sense bereft?

NUBIAN.

Hark—their wild shouts!

SEGED *(unheeding them).*

He stands amid the uproar
Calm, lofty, massive, and immoveable;
A granite mountain amid clouds and wind:
The roar of waves, and clang of choughs below,
From its own steadfast heights inaudible!

PHŒNICIAN.

Behold! the sages gather round: he speaks.

PROMETHEUS.

Elders of Egypt! grey and reverend men!
Ye are the venerable time-worn pillars
Who make the stately pile of government
Immoveable; and give it symmetry,
And grace, and strength, and beauty! and ye are
The windows, whose clear eyes do see within,
And let in light; and shew where the decay,
The injuries of time begin; the flaws
Of war, or of corruption; which your wisdom
And grey experience rectify and heal.

Ye are spread through the city and the state,
The many arms of justice; where the weak
Daily resort to, and are heard; and whom
The strong can not escape. In your firm hands
The keys are of religion and the laws.
Ye are the stars, who, from your fixèd height
And purity, do shed your influence down
Upon the lower herd: who, from your seats,
Justice and Mercy watching on each side,
Inspire the decent reverence ye deserve!
I call your venerable wisdoms here:
The state is torn by anarchy; misrule,
Corruption, and its infinite abuse,
The sure effects of tyranny, are crept
Within. Join ye, with your united minds,
And heal, and bring it to its healthful strength.
Ye will not dread to hear, nor tell the truth
Ne'er told to kings; and ye will see and know
The ills ye crush, hid from his eyes and ears:
Therefore this crown, which was by him profaned,
I offer here in solemn sacrifice
To the immortal gods, while I invoke them,
And ye, my fellow men! to ratify
The work which I have finished.

(He places the crown and sceptre upon the altar, amidst the shouts of the assembled nations.)

SEGED.

What a man!
What a hero!

EGYPTIAN.

Behold, they kneel to him,
As if he were a god descended there.

SEGED.

Whenever did men stand irreverent
Before a revelation of the godlike?—
Nature's religion rooted in his heart;
Which, when all others pass, and are forgot,
Shall stand unshaken to the end of time.
Men must bow down before the palpable,
The known, the understood: where worthier shewn
Than in the man who, sacrificing self,
Transcends, while feeling his humanity?

PROMETHEUS.

My fellow men! this day's deed is your own:
Oh, with what glory shall ye be arrayed,
The honourable men who dared stand forth,
And, in the face of tyranny, proclaim
The laws of liberty immutable,
And rights of nations! For in what consists
The worth and gloriousness of Liberty?
Not in a statute, or wise ordinance,—
These are its shows; nor functionary powers:
But in the vivifying life it gives;
The spring it pours from its self-freshening source:
The independence, peace, and happiness,
And elevation of the minds of men!
Freedom springs from no form of government;
But freemen's hearts, they bear it in themselves:
The base man forges his own chains within him,
When struck off from his hands: the one would be
A slave in Freedom's arms; the other free,
Though bound to earth in chains! Look to yon sun,

That gives us light,—the earth that nourishes;
They give their equal benefits to all.
Doth not great Nature thus declare ye equal,
Alike her children? Let us, then, unite,
One vast society; and own one law,
Eternal Nature's: one pure code of reason,
One throne of justice——here! one altar-place
To sacrifice to Heaven and Liberty!

THE MULTITUDE.

Unfold to us the laws of Liberty—
The causes of all ills—what should we do?

PROMETHEUS.

No public calamity is self-born:
All evils rise from ignorance, and desires
Inordinate of tyranny—tax, tribute,
Want, slavery o'ertasked—the soul's abasement,
Embruting what was godlike, yet with gleams,
Dared the man speak, of what it might have been,
Whose rousing from that torpor is revenge,
Brute-like and merciless. In reforming wrong
Remember ye are human! Be the laws
Of natural right inviolate; the bounds
Of property be hallowed: Justice fixed them,
And be her landmarks sacred! if o'erstepped,
All social compact is destroyed: man turns
To the primeval savage—might is right.
Justice, sole fountain of all virtue, lives
In rendering every man his own—or won
By wisdom or by valour, or descended

From a time-honoured ancestry, bequeathed
As heirlooms. Salutary fear first taught
Justice to men: brute strength was prostrated
By the nerved arm of Law; it is the arch
Of a state's triumph, its divinity;
Honour, wealth, freedom, and domestic peace,
Within its hallowed sanctuaries abide!

VOICES OF THE MULTITUDE.

We ask but justice—to be free and equal;
To enjoy the common blessings of our life
In moderation, and with gratitude:
We seek our evils and their cause, to crush them.

PROMETHEUS.

The origin of ill is in yourselves—
In your own hearts—created by self-love;
No evil doth exist, or is endured,
Save made by ye: it springs but from disorder;
The oppression of the strong above the weak.
The order of the universe deceives not,
The silent laws of Nature set before us:
So let reflection discipline your minds;
And a superior judgment set apart.
Feel ye for all your brethren alike:
Humanity, our love of fellow man,
Instinct celestial, cherished by self-love,
Is the first principle of human justice;
Even its harshest and discordant notes
Blend in the universal harmony:

Civilization's hymn still swells above,
Heard through the jarring tempest to its close.
Justice and truth—these are men's earliest duties:
His country and his home—his best affections—
All social sympathies—spring but from these;
Hallowed by peace, and guarding Liberty!

THE MULTITUDE.

We demand but our common birthright, freedom:
Freemen to live, and freemen to enjoy.

PROMETHEUS.

But in your freedom still be merciful!
Respect humanity in its lowest scale;
The hand of natural law protects the slave!
Let him, the artisan, have needful rest;
Let him who tills the earth its produce share;
It is his birthright as a man: but be
The mutual interchange of right revered,—
First, holiest commerce on which blessing hangs!
Let him relax from toil: he is not brute,
But human! Let him cultivate the affections,
Whose freshest flowers spring from the rudest soil.
In social harmony let the general voice
Speak for the general weal: thus vice shall be
Exposed before the metropolitan eye,
And virtue made familiar. Let each
Give suffrage for his rulers; highest honour
The elected can aspire to!—What so fixed
As the air-based yet adamantine seat
Of popular opinion?

THE MULTITUDES *(stretching forth their hands, answering with acclamations).*

We obey
Whatever rulers are set over us;
We asked but liberty to share it—prove
Your virtue and our own.

PROMETHEUS.

Answer, ye heavens!
A nation's voice calls ye to ratify
A deed of justice, than which more sublime
Cannot be done in your immortal mansions!
This day doth make us brethren, Amasis!
The vast heart of Humanity is joined;
And this will be thy safeguard and protection.
(Embracing him.)
Depart thou as a common man, and mingle
With thy own kind; there study thou the heart,
The human heart, of which thou knowest little;
And it will humanize thine own, in seeing
And feeling how thou once didst make it suffer:
Thou wilt then feel those common sympathies
Men hold towards their brethren!—ties of nature
Which draw them to their fellow-men, and teach them
Nothing should be alienate, but common.
Men are not what thou think'st them, Amasis!
As this great day hath shewn thee. Though they be
By tyranny degraded to the dust;
Yea, by their passions more embruted still;
There comes a time for nations, as there doth
For solitary human hearts, when they

Feel they are sunk, and what they might have been,
Had they obeyed the loftier impulses
Of their high nature. Mayst thou hear that voice,
And be a wiser, better man—farewell!
Go thou thy way of life as I go mine.

(Amasis descends; the crowd everywhere make way for him, in silence.)

My countrymen! the work is done, and great
Hath been your self-endurance; yea, sublime.
Lo! how that man doth pass through ye, unharmed,
Among the crowds, who part from him like waters,
Closing again behind: with myriads round,
He walks alone his solitary way!
One universal feeling rules through all:
Ye are allied, and joined in harmony,
As is the world around ye, by the same
Great quickening soul, and principle of love!
Ye have not stained the wreath of Liberty
With human blood,—yet the great work is done,
And by the gods and your own hearts approved:
Your measure of content is full. Farewell!
Peacefully to my home I now return,
As ye to yours; to dwell upon the past,
And thank the gods on our domestic hearths.

THE PEOPLE *(pressing round him, with acclamation).*

Yoke him a car—let him not touch the earth!
Bear him to Memphis in triumphant march.

PROMETHEUS.

The work is done for which I entered Memphis:
She is free; let none disturb her peace again!

Have ye forgot your oaths?—doth it become
Free men to bear the yoke? No! let us not
Assume the badge of slavery in sport:
Oh! let not holy Liberty forget
Her decencies, although in triumph! Lead me,
My fellow-countrymen, on to the Nile;
Then take ye my last blessing, while I go
Peacefully to my peaceful solitude.

(The multitudes form in procession with Prometheus, crowning him with flowers, and singing triumphant hymns—Memphians, Ethiopians, &c., remaining behind in groupes.)

NUBIAN.

He goes—and with a step as self-possessed,
As if the solid world were but as dust
Beneath his feet; and men and kings the toys
Of his capricious will.

MEMPHIAN.

He must descend
To suffrage like the rest—his own decree;
Would all were mine—or death or banishment!

EGYPTIAN.

And mine!—

VARIOUS VOICES.

And all!—

SEGED.

Why wouldst thou banish him?

NUBIAN.

And who art thou who look'st on us as if——

SEGED.

I saw your natures through—'tis even so.
I waited but to see if the old leaven,
Ingratitude—the life-pulse of our nature—
Was manifest here: the viper's slimy trail
Sullying the track of virtue: the dull cloud
Dimming the transient glory! Yet, I ask ye,
Why would ye banish him?

NUBIAN.

Because he is
Too great—too good: he makes us feel we are
Inferior in our natures; so we hate him.

SEGED.

'Tis just—'tis ever so: thus hath it been,
And shall be—man must work with imperfection;
If he be perfect, who can comprehend him?
So must he ever stand alone in power,
Envy, mistrust, and hate—his ministers.
Ye do but act your parts; ye are but baser
Than those who follow but his sun-like fortune,
Not him: if but a check o'ercross his path,
The meanest of ye is more strong than he.
Plot on—I leave ye—act up to your natures!

MEMPHIAN.

'Tis the grey Seged—he is soured with time
And disappointment: heed not—let him pass.

NUBIANS, ETC.

Long life to Amasis, and to the priesthood!

(Exeunt.)

SCENE VI.

"I have touched the highest point of all my greatness;
And from that full meridian of my glory
I haste now to my setting. I shall fall
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,
And no man see me more."

. "Oh! let not Virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was."

SHAKESPEARE

SCENE VI.

THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS.—*The Sun is rising over Memphis in the distance.*

PROMETHEUS.

Behold the great work done! methinks yon city
Hath gained a fresher glory with her freedom,
And doth more harmonize with Nature:—No,
It is the moral beauty which my soul
Doth know she hath attained, invests her thus,
And colours her with its own feelings. I
Behold no shoals of life driven to those heaps
Of shapeless stone, that sullenly, apart
From the proud city, stand like barren rocks,
Naked and desolate upon the sands.
There comes a hum at times—a busy sound,
As if the vast heart of Humanity
Were re-awakening from its torpid sleep.

O holy Freedom! thou hast done all this;
First-born of Nature, entering from her
All ready-armed into the soul of man,
Thou makest him at once divine!—he raises
His open brow to heaven, and feels the sun
Doth animate his intellectual fire;
That the free space is boundless as his thought;

And in the rocks and rushing waves he reads
Stern lessons of resistance, while the winds
Come trumpet-tongued, inspiring daring deeds!
Mighty enchanter! who, when thou art oppressed
By shadowing hosts, dost raise thy Gorgon shield
Before thy naked heart,—at which the eyes
Of tyrants darken; their mailed hands fall down,
While they stand heaven-struck monuments of fear.
And thou, O Nature! watching thee, I have learned
These thoughts, until they seemed in me innate,
So deeply hath thy spirit entered mine!
Thou art free in all thy attributes; thy least
Fulfil their necessary duties, making
The whole so beautifully tempered to
Divinest order!
Glorious archetype
Of the Eternal One who moves in thee!—
The feeling breathed through all, that melts our hearts
To the deep starry harmonies around them.
Man is a natural part of thee, when he
Feels, too, his origin: but when his mind
Becomes enslaved, his body doth embrute;
All aspiration, then, is quenched; all sense
Of aught save pain and hunger: nothing short
Of thunder can arouse him from his sloth:
For custom's chains sit easily, until
His dungeon is relinquished with a sigh.

Behold!—my brother, with a hurried step
Ascends the hill; he now is looking back
As if pursued; his raiment torn—his sword
Reeking with blood——

EPIMETHEUS *(hastily breaks in).*

My brother! all is lost!
Fly thou from Egypt!

PROMETHEUS.

How!

EPIMETHEUS.

The tale is short:
The priests have re-established Amasis;
The soldiery, by threats and bribes immense,
Have been won over from the people's side;
The slaves are given their freedom, and are swilled
In brute forgetfulness; the citizens
Proscribed, while those remembered by the king
Are hourly led out to the slaughter. Thou,
Above them all, art sought for: they who come
To take thee are upon their way. I fought
My path through the thick press, and I am here.

PROMETHEUS *(looking upwards).*

O ye just gods! be the revenge your own!
As they have spurned the blessed gift ye gave them,
Their natural birthright—and will not assert
And prove its value, even so make ye
Their human tyrants spurn them: so leave them
To their embruted natures! Let them pile
Their monuments of shame up to the clouds;
Then let your lightnings crush them in their ruins,
Annihilating the vile worms who reared them!
Away! 'tis vain to mourn for what is done,—
Wrathful against our fellow-men, in feeling
Their baseness or ingratitude. They are
Formed thus: it is their nature to recur

Ever to self; to accuse them were to war
Against the laws of Nature. I rejoice,
For my great part remains: to stand alone,
A martyr to the cause they have forsook,
And die for that I would have lived. I came
Too soon upon the earth; ere man had drunk
Deeply enough of slavery's cup to know
His own prostration. I should have been born
A later age: and yet my ends of life
Are now fulfilled: for I shall be remembered
As the first man who dared stand up confronting
The giant Tyranny; who proved to men
The hollowness of the clay idol; who
Inspired him with the flame of Liberty,
And made him feel that it was drawn from heaven.
My name shall be a watchword to light others
To emulate my deeds: I have not failed:
I have awoke the spark that dieth not
Even in the grave, but is, like life, transfused
Through the vast metropolitan heart of man,—
From sire to son, from age to age, crushed down,
But unforgotten,—waiting for the breath
To kindle it again to life!

EPIMETHEUS.

They come!

PROMETHEUS.

Not here—this cavern shall not be profaned,
For it is sacred;
(To the guard, who appear at the entrance)
Back—and wait me, slaves!
My brother, come; *(to the guard)* lead on to Amasis!
(Exeunt.)

SCENE VII.

"How high a pitch his resolution soars!"

.

"His nature is too noble for this world:
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder."

SHAKESPEARE.



SCENE VII.

THE TEMPLE OF OSIRIS.

AMASIS *on his throne. Hierophants, Courtiers, Guards, &c.*

AMASIS.

AT length the gods have fixed me on my throne,
And ratified my right, thus giving me
Double security, by building up
My seat upon the ruins of my foes.
Egypt shall reek like one vast altar-place:
She hath returned to her allegiance,
From which she was affrighted; those weak slaves
Who dared insult anointed majesty
Are lulled to a supine security.
They shall not wake: the soldiery are mine;
And the officious citizens proscribe
Each other. But the crown of my great triumph
Is wanting still: if I beheld the head
Of that arch-rebel——

Enter PREFECT OF THE GUARD.

O King—live for ever!
Prometheus waits without, in chains, to be
Led to thy presence.

CHIEF HIEROPHANT.

Favourite of the gods!
Lo! they remember those who hallow them:
Thou speakest but thy wish and it is done;
Wherefore not now strike off the rebel's head,
Ere his blasphemous tongue profane thine ears?

AMASIS.

(Not heeding him, but Prometheus, who, chained and guarded, is slowly advancing through the ranks of the soldiery, from the extremity of the hall.)

He comes—and with a brow as self-possessed,
And tranquil, as when I descended from
My throne before him like a child, and owned
The mind superior. I know not how
His genius o'ermasters mine. I feel
Nothing when in his presence; he appears
More kingly in his chains; and yet, perchance,
He may love life: the face is but a mask,
Moulded by cowards as brave men alike
To suit their purposes. It is his spirit
I would o'ercome; impalement, chains, and death,
Are nothing—instruments that minister
And feed its pride, leaving it unsubdued.

(Aloud to Prometheus.)

Behold, slave! how thou stand'st a monument,
To prove the justice of the gods, and show
How vain is the ambition and the hope
Of lawless rebels, and how brief their triumph.
It was but yesterday that thou, upheld
By mercenary bondsmen, didst dare brave me.

To-day thy power is gone: the people left thee,
While the just gods have marked the rightful king,
And brought thee to ask pardon at my footstool.

PROMETHEUS.

Even while thou speakest to me thou dost feel
The falsehood deeply, as I know; thine eye
Doth sink before mine own, as if to hide
The weakness thou art conscious I behold.
Thou sittest there the slave, and I the king:
These chains are subject to my will, which is
Superior to fortune; yea, unmoved,
As that of the immortal gods!

AMASIS.

If thou
Resemblest them in nature, so thou say'st,
Wherefore have they betrayed thee to my hands?

PROMETHEUS.

Who dares to fathom their mysterious will?
Why do the lightnings strike down their own altars?
Why doth the Nile, gorged daily with new victims,
Lay waste the lands of his adorers?—why
Art thou allowed to tyrannize o'er Egypt?
I'll answer thee—the storms do purify
The airs from plague, more pure and more serene
When they are spent; the waters, when their tides
Have ebbed, leave earth behind them rich with spoils:
And thou, when rotting in thy tomb—if thou
Art suffered to repose in peace—shalt leave
The memory behind thee of thy deeds;

While thy grave, like a dangerous sea-mark, warns
Mankind to guard against their future kings.
And say'st thou I am in thy power?—how?
Canst thou subdue me by these chains?—by death?
They are the wings to free my body from
A form I hate—for it resembles thine,
And those whom I thought men. My mind is free,
Yea, calmer now than ever; for all ties
With life are broken, and now, eagle-like,
It doth look down on earth's low quarry.

CHIEF HIEROPHANT.

King!
Behold the unawed rebel dares to sit
Within thy presence.

PROMETHEUS.

I sit here the king:
I feel the majesty of Egypt in me,
Resting within my own ancestral hall!

CHIEF HIEROPHANT.

King! wilt thou hear his blasphemies?——

PROMETHEUS *(turning to the priest).*

He will:
If thou knew'st human nature, Priest! as well
As thou dost that of the inscrutable gods,
Then thou wouldst know that he who dares speak truth
Fearlessly, will be heard, although his words
Be adders: for, unlike thy hollow idols,
Mouth-pierced with lies—foul priesthood's jugglery,
He tells the truth, and so doth wake excitement

In the palled hearts of kings, not from its worth,
But charm of novelty. Thou hast said well, *(To Amasis)*
That the high gods are just. I have fulfilled
The part assigned me, and I have succeeded;
For I have humbled thee, and told the nations
Truths they responded—truths they have foresworn.
Yet the whole mass is not corruption; soul
Is not all quenched; and, 'midst the few, my words
Shall live like sparks among the ashes, hidden,
But burning still! This was my spirit's aim;
The gods have shewn me Egypt did not merit
Their greatest gift, and have withdrawn it, leaving
Thee, King! to be their scourge, and I to shew them
The track they should have followed. Then rule on;
Heap up thy Pyramids, and there record
Thy deeds—the shame and slavery of Egypt!
Thou art a useful tool, conjoined with Death,
To sweep this generation from the earth,
Until another comes——

AMASIS.

Hear first thy doom!
Thou prid'st thyself upon thy ancestry,
Trusting to link thy name with theirs; to gain
That vainest of all shadows—fame, which thou
Dost so aspire, and which, when thou art dead,
Avails thee nothing. Therefore, first, their names
Shall be struck out from the archives of Egypt;
The punishment of death accorded him
Who names them: all their monuments
Shall be destroyed, that nothing may recal
They ever were. Thyself shalt be borne to

Thy mountain; and, before the cave where thou
Hast hatched thy machinations, thou shalt be
Impaled alive, and left to be devoured
By vultures: then, when rotted by the sun,
Thy body shall be burnt; thy ashes thrown,
Scattered abroad upon the winds of heaven,
To be forgotten like thy actions!——

PROMETHEUS *(springing to his feet, with a wild gesture).*

Never!
My limbs may wither in the air!—my dust
Be scattered to the winds of heaven!—my fathers
May be forgotten in their ashes!—But
My name shall last till time shall be no more!
And these shall be the immortal appendages,
To robe it with a glory of its own!
What!—thinkest thou the soul of Freedom dead?—
The sun that kindles up the world, because
Its light is here extinct in its first beam?
Fool!—I am but an atom of that life
That doth exist for ever—through all time—
All space—all change—all life—all death!——I am
A spark of that pure, everlasting flame,
Burning within the heart of hearts of man,
That may be trampled on, not quenched!—It is
The universal soul of human kind—
First principle of being—Liberty!
Stamped by the gods our birthright upon earth!

CHIEF HIEROPHANTS *(rising tumultuously).*

Gag the vile slave, who dares stand there, arraigning
The anointed majesty of Egypt!

PROMETHEUS.

Ay,
Away—and lead me to my doom!—I waste
My passion on the stones, and am profaned
In breathing this attainted air! I pant
For the great martyrdom I have deserved!
My soul is up, and ardent to depart,
And join the mighty spirits of my fathers!
'Tis the reward which the gods owe me!—I
Have done my task—have left the memory
Of deeds and words that shall be felt hereafter,
With an earthquake revulsion, through the world!
The solitary Voice may be forgot:
But empires overthrown, and scourging war,
Famine, and pestilence, shall teach this truth
To after generations; blazoned by
Destruction's torch made visible to all:—
Nature's eternal laws of truth and freedom
Shall not be trampled on in vain!
I yield,
Reed-like, before the storm that bows me down,
But crushes not my soul!—I stand erect,
And welcome as a friend pale-faced Despair!
I bare my naked heart to her embrace,
While she doth lead me to the death I love,—
Making death lovely by abhorring life
Even as I do!—Wreak, then, your worst malice
On this poor cell that compasseth about
The imperishable spirit!—which, within
Its feeling citadel, shall laugh to scorn
Assaults that cannot move her!

CHIEF HIEROPHANT *(aside to the Prefect).*

By the gods,
Had he gained victory, he had been great!
With what o'ermastering energy of will
His spirit spoke!—his passions will destroy
His body ere the hand of vengeance strike.

CHIEF PREFECT.

Peace!—the king rises from his throne.

AMASIS.

Thou hast used,
And fearlessly, the slave's prerogative;
But think not I will stoop to answer thee:
I am the king, the ratified by heaven!
Bear him from hence.

PROMETHEUS.

Thou impotent in power!
Think'st thou to terrify by such examples?
The frequency of punishment doth mark
A government's impotence. There is no man
So base whose nature may not be improved.
The sentence in the popular mind creates
A sense of tyrannous power more than awe,
At which the heart doth secretly rebel;
Yea, and would interpose if armed with power.
They are remembered injuries, hoarded deep,
Which self-love trebly will repay at last.

AMASIS.

And shall rebellion, hydra-headed, crushed,
E'er rise again?

PROMETHEUS.

No tyrant ever marked
Where the first germs of liberty were set,
Whose roots innately are in human hearts.
They are like Nature's silent operations,
Unseen—inaudible. Who marks the acorn
Cast carelessly on earth by some light wind?
Who blesses not its growth, when it doth rise
A trunk of rest and shelter from the storm?

AMASIS.

And what should Amasis fear behind his walls,
And gates of marble and of brass?

PROMETHEUS.

Opinion!—
Opinion, the sole ruler of the world,
Submits not to the power of kings—they are
Its earliest slaves: they may defy—but dread,
And feel, and own its power. It is the first,
The groundwork, yea, foundation of all law,
Stamped not on marbles, but on human hearts:
Which, of itself, doth constitute a state;
Which, with each day, accumulates fresh power;
Which, when all other laws are or extinct
Or weak, renews and strengthens them; which binds
A people to their earliest institutions,
'Till habit doth insensibly become

Authority; that law, so strong, so solid,
Moved by a breath, or shaken by a straw,
But overturned not by a giant's strength,
Is based upon OPINION!

AMASIS.

Bear him hence!
Bind him with chains, and triple the guard's strength;
Then lead him to the mountain, through the city,
That all may see the gods love Amasis.

(The guard close their ranks, Prometheus in the centre, and are slowly departing from the hall.)

PROMETHEUS *(turning towards Amasis, while departing).*

I go to death as calmly as to sleep;
Life's feverish fit of passion past: thou liv'st
Thy moment longer—then, to be forgot;
But that my rays of fame shall fall on thee,
Stamping thy name indelibly with mine
On earth; where men shall judge between us, while
The gods decide who best hath lived, in heaven!

AMASIS.

Hold!—

CHIEF PREFECT.

The king much is moved—he changes colour.

CHIEF HIEROPHANT.

Shall we not on the spot, great king! impale him?

AMASIS *(struggling with contending emotions).*

No—in the dungeon let him rest till morn.

SCENE VIII.

"O place and greatness, millions of false eyes
Are stuck upon thee!—volumes of report
Run with these false and most contrarious quests
Upon thy doings!—thousand 'scapes of wit
Make thee the father of their idle dream,
And rack thee in their fancies!"

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE VIII.

THE PYRAMIDS—*Groupes of Slaves, of various Nations, reclining round them, feasting and revelling.*

EGYPTIAN.

O glorious day! we have liberty again!
Is not this liberty!—to sit and feast
Here in the shadow?

NUBIAN.

And no prefects near,
With threats or lashes to torment us; no
Shelterless beds on marble, withered by
The moon at night, and scorched up in the day,—
Our only resting-place the grave!

PHŒNICIAN.

It seems
That this Prometheus was, at heart, a tyrant?

EGYPTIAN.

Nay, it is manifest we were beguiled;
His moderation and his sanctity
Were made a cloak to hide his purposes.

BABYLONIAN *(doubtfully).*

He might have made himself the king——

EGYPTIAN.

Even so:
When he uncrowned the royal Amasis,
He might have crowned himself, but feared to do so.
The popular voice was raised against all kings;
It had been useless work to stem the tide.

PHŒNICIAN.

There he shewed wisdom.

EGYPTIAN.

Rather say, shrewd art:
He waited his own time: he knew the priests
Abhorred him, not a holy man appeared.
No marvel that he failed, unhallowed by
The gods or them!

NUBIAN.

What was the boasted freedom
We were to enjoy? A tribe of reverend judges
Were to rule over us, like lynxes, prying
Into all corners: full of eyes and ears.
Nothing would have escaped them; revelling,
The free use of our tongues had been forbidden.

EGYPTIAN.

But mark—this was his masterstroke of art:
A bitter for our palates; to prepare
Our minds the better for receiving him.

PHŒNICIAN.

He was the lineal heir——

EGYPTIAN.

But I say, ever
Let the strong rule! they are better formed for it.
He *was* the son of Mœris, who, with wars,
With battles, sieges, and erecting camps
And towers of triumph, emptying whole rivers
Forth from their natural beds, and turning cities
Within them, gave us a little time to think,
And less to live; but he, at last, was quiet:
And then his twins turned out a rotten branch,
And were lopped off; time shewed with justice: one
Turned courtier, cringing to the very man
Who spared him, whom he then betrayed; the other
Became philosopher, and hatched up creeds,
And came, at last, into the world to prove them,
Shrewdly and well,—that truth I dare aver:
We were fooled over to his purpose, rushing
To our own ruin, till our eyes were opened
By Amasis, and by the holy priesthood.

BABYLONIAN *(mysteriously)*.

Ay, they have told us serious truth; they say
This man doth mock the hallowed gods of Egypt,
Of earth, and of the waters, which our sires
Have worshipped through all generations.

EGYPTIAN.

Why
Did we not tear him into pieces?

NUBIAN.

He
Will be impaled alive to-morrow's sun!

EGYPTIAN.

Osiris speed the day!

NUBIAN.

His brother's doom
Is death.

PHŒNICIAN.

His just desert! Say, where is Seged?
How hath the veteran met the adverse tide?
He loved the twins as if he were their father;
And, right or wrong, the old man was sincere,
And must this change of fate take heavily.

BABYLONIAN.

The last time I beheld him, his eyes were
Fixed on the rebel—then in all his power—
As if they grew there; having lost all sense
To nearer objects; tears were on his cheeks
Of joy, which we did reverence; they flowed
From his remembrances of happier times!

(Trumpets and clarions heard in the distance.)

PHŒNICIAN.

Hark! the king's sentence is proclaiming through
The streets of Memphis, whither he is borne:
Let us go hence and witness the procession.

NUBIAN.

Long life to Amasis!

EGYPTIANS, ETC.

May he live for ever!

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IX.

. . . . "Thou art infected:
This visitation shews it."
. "It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it, he is so above me:
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere."
. . . . "He is gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics"
.

"And whether we shall meet again I know not:
Therefore—our everlasting farewell take!"

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE IX.

THE DUNGEON OF THE PALACE.

PROMETHEUS *discovered, chained.*

THE night is waning and far spent; but I
Have had the last sleep I shall know on earth.
My mind doth feel the hours it hath to live,
Watching the flitting moments as they pass
With eye considerate, and solemn thought,
Distinct from fear, while dwelling on the past.
The strife is over now; and I stand here
Even as a warrior who, his shield cast by,
Doth calmly contemplate the field of battle;
The uselessness of strife where victory
Was but defeat, where Ignorance crouched down,
Still trampled over, but unconquered still.
Yet even this night of time will leave its star,
Heralding after blessings to the future;
And, if it failed its light, I was—I am!
I bared my heart towards my fellow-men:
I taught the social sympathies of life;
The elevation and the purity
Of the soul in its consciousness of freedom;

The kindred fellowship, the mutual love,
The genial flame from heaven descended, lit
In the deep heart of man, embracing all
Circling around its felt humanities!
I was a link but of the infinite chain,
Broken, and re-united: then, not useless;
And, oh! unworthy were he now to droop,
Who felt his discipline of duty, love:
Yea, part of his own being's overflow
Toward his brethren; who won his crown
Found in the measureless reward obtained
Even from his own pure bosom.
Yet a span,
A little span of agony remains
To strive with; weak invention of the malice
That tortures what it cannot overcome;
Which, weak though be the triumph, doth affect
Men more than loftiest actions: for their natures
Sympathize more with suffering than can
Their minds with thoughts that are unborn in them.
But they shall hear my words; for though *they* feel not,
I shall have then unburthened my full heart,
Which must pour forth its passion, though it be
To rocks and echoless mountains.
Hark! a chain
Withdraws; it is not morning yet—Who comes?

LILIS, *holding up a lamp, enters through a secret door.*

Prometheus—wake!

PROMETHEUS.

High woman! is it thou?

Daughter of Amasis! say, wherefore here,
And how—at this dead hour?

LILIS.

Dost *thou* ask
How far the deed will go when there is will
And heart to execute? Even I, a woman,
One who hath shrunk before the gaze of man,
And nurtured among scenes that make the heart
More soft, have dared already more than death,
The sullying of thy honour or my own!

PROMETHEUS.

What hath inspired thee to come?

LILIS.

Thy words!

PROMETHEUS.

How—have they ever said I feared to die?

LILIS.

No!—they have taught me that thou art immortal;
And, therefore, have I come. Nay, frown not thus,
Though it be on the daughter of thy foe;
Nor deem a weaker feeling led me here
Than honour, even as spotless as thine own.
The ardent love of lofty thoughts and deeds;
The aspirations of that fame which I
Glory in thee, yet would not wish to share.
In loving these, I love thee, for thou dost

Embody them; I—I would only save thee
From the vile death that waits thee with the morn.

PROMETHEUS.

And if I am the man that thou hast said,—
The patriot who would have saved his country;
The sage who could refuse the crown he plucked
From the usurper's head, to offer it
To the applauding gods; if I have conquered
The ambition that allured me—sacrificed
An earthly, to secure a deathless crown,
An immortality amongst mankind!—
Shall I now forfeit the great treasure?—*now*,
When the far goal is won, the prize in view?
And for a few brief years of wretched life,
Blackened with foul disgrace, and which are nothing
In time's brief scroll, blast all that I have done?
Lose my high hopes, and crush the cause of Freedom
I have upheld; yea, worse—dishonour her
In her own chosen son? stamping a curse
Upon my name for ever, and recording
(What slaves and tyrants never would forget)
That he,—the man who lived and talked of freedom,—
Feared when the trial came to die for her!

LILIS.

Not thus—not thus!—think'st thou that I would cast
One shade upon thy sunlike fame which I
Glory in, even as though it were my own?
But to see thee impaled, and scorched beneath
The fiery sun,—gasping with that last thirst

Which only death can slake, while Hate holds near
The draught, that heightens agony to madness;—
To be the mark of the slave's mockery,
For the free minds will not dare shew their thoughts,
Far less stand forth to rescue thee;—could I
Think of thy pangs and slumber?—Hear me yet!
If when the morning dawns thou art not found,
The fame will spread the gods have taken thee;
So wouldst thou be remembered, and if power
Were given thee hereafter thou mightst break——

PROMETHEUS.

Lilis!—I look beyond the idle creeds
Of our priest-ridden race, who are debased
Beneath the brutes and monsters they adore.
I would not borrow a divinity,
Fooling the people with a lie, thus making
Heaven pander to my falsehood. My fame springs
Forth from my deeds, resembling the gods,
In adding to the nation's happiness.
But, could I mount the throne of Mœris now,
And share it with thee,—nay—turn not away,
Lilis! such should have been thy destiny,—
I would not change the impaled stake for that crown.
I look towards it, as the test to prove
That Liberty hath chosen well her martyr:
My nature is subdued to my fixed will,
Which shall be felt triumphant most in death.
The sun of fame shines only on the tomb;
And he who plants the laurel never yet
Did rest beneath its shadow! others reap

The harvest—but the sower is forgot!
This is, and shall be the reward of all
Who struggle to reform mankind—they perish
In persecution, want, or agonies:
But the just gods ordain it, that their deeds,
Or words, survive them. Circumstance and time
Reveal, at last, the royalty of mind,
Last hope of conquered nations; they, the kings,
Without the name, who veritably reign
By power of will, and grandeur of their thoughts,
Are chosen from events they should command.
Sole of their race, the scion and the root,
They disappear, their mission when fulfilled,
Leaving their mandates to the future; words,
Like Fate's behests, as faithfully obeyed.
Then all the daring thoughts, for which they bled,
Are dwelt on; all the sufferings are remembered
Which they bore for their fellow-men, who bless them
And rank them, not too late, among the gods.
Their names are cherished in all hearts; their deeds
Are trumpeted abroad, and become virtues,
The watchwords that lead on to victory!
I think not of the crowd who will behold me;
I shall not see, nor hear them; all ties are
Broken between us; they have shewn their firmness,
Now let them be the witnesses of mine!

LILIS.

Forgive me, son of Mœris! that I owned
My woman's nature: I would save thee yet,
Preserve thy honour, and—alas! I cannot.

One latest boon I ask, for which I kneel!
We meet no more upon this earth: thou goest
To join the spirits of thy fathers; I,
To dwell on thy remembrances—to live
Upon the light which thou hast left behind,
And soon, perchance, to follow thee. But, oh!
When in the realms of death, where thou wilt be
So hallowed and revered—forget not Lilis!
If memories of earth cling to us there,
As sure they do; for the dead come to us
In dreams, and woo us to revisit them;
Then, when thou meetest me again, remember
How I looked up to thee on earth, and smile
A look of welcome on me then!

PROMETHEUS.

My own
Beautiful being!—with thy golden hair,
Like sun-rays floating round thy face, with eyes
Reflecting the pure azure, with cheeks which
The beauty and the glory of thy youth
Crown with fresh roses, but more delicate
Than ever shone the sun on,—what hast thou
In common with myself? what see'st thou
In this worn frame, and early blanchèd hair?
It is thy noble nature that deceives thee!
Love of the high and pure, abstract from me,
Which thou embodiest in myself: it is
My isolation from Humanity
Hath wrought on thy imagination; this
A feeling that is past or passing. Nay,

Turn not aside in anger or in grief!
Time imperceptibly will teach thy heart
Truths I too rudely press on it: all feelings
Of youth change, flower-like; honour stands alone,
Like the impassive rock, unchangeable;
Thou wilt pass by me as the streamlet glides,
Embosoming the shadow to its depths,
Till again laughing in the light of heaven!

LILIS.

Oh, thou wilt judge me worthier yet, or here,
Or in hereafter!

PROMETHEUS.

My own Lilis! chide not
This brow's austerity, that shews alone
The resolution of the mind within.
I stand before the gates of Death; do not
Soften a heart that needeth all its courage,
Nor aid thy sire in conquering a mind
His racks will fail to do. Oh! tempt me not
To cling to life I should despise, and thee,
Lilis! even thee, for so debasing me!
I am but man, and feel—even now I feel—
How man's strong will melts at the breath of woman!
Depart—depart! I am no mate for love.
Look on me: there are men of highest order,
Upon whose foreheads Destiny doth set
Her seal, marking them out for deeds that raise them
Above the common roll of men. She makes them
Stifle all human feelings, burying in

Their hearts all passions, yea, without a pang!
She bids them bare their heads to meet the storms
Of war, and persecution: their whole lives
Are one stern self-denial! if they faint
Or quail in their high task, she points to them
Where, far above the clouds, Fame's holy star
Shews them their crown of immortality!
Farewell—embrace me with a brother's love:
When I am gone think of me, till we meet,
As one who on the earth would have been thine,
And trod the paths of love; but who was snatched
From them in youth, and brought up in the desert
By Liberty, until he grew like her,
Inflexible; and offered up himself
The sacrifice on her deserted altar,
To feed the fire which he had kindled there!

LILIS.

Yet—yet thy blessing.

PROMETHEUS.

Lilis! be thou blest!

(They embrace.)

LILIS.

Say that thou dost approve me. From the hour
That thou didst save my father—oh! he *was*
My father!—I felt that our hearts were one:
My spirit from that moment fled to thine,
Never to be repulsed, but joined till death!

PROMETHEUS.

My gentle Lilis! we shall meet again;

Yea, link our destinies together in
A happier life than this. I feel the gods
Have so ordained it. Who could look on thee,
Nor read the stamp of immortality
On that high brow, in those mysterious eyes?
The Beautiful never dies, it doth but fade
In Nature to renew itself again:
Could it be less with glorious hearts like thine?
Could the immortal gods be thus unjust?
And if I yielded to the love of life,
And thou couldst wish it, Lilis!—which thou dost not—
It were too late; what art could now evade
The inevitable death that closes round?
And wouldst thou darken with disgrace the brightness
Of my last parting?

LILIS.

Never!

PROMETHEUS.

Then—farewell!
And be thou blest!—she doth not hear me—hark!
(The clank of chains is heard without.)
The guard!—yet gain thou but yon secret gate,
My Lilis!—waken, love, farewell!——

LILIS.

For ever!
(Prometheus bears her out.)

SCENE X.

. "Though perils did abound
As thick as thought could make them, and appear
In forms more horrid, yet my duty,
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,
Should the approach of this wild river break,
And stand unshaken yours!"

.

"Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat:
Nor the strong tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit!"

.

"I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life."

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE X.

THE PYRAMIDS.—*The open country is covered with the assembled multitudes. In the distance the Memphian soldiery are escorting* PROMETHEUS, *chained, to the place of execution. Various groupes are gathered together in the foreground.*

EGYPTIAN.

HERE—let us reach this pediment, and stand
Above the crushing of the crowd, who must,
With the procession, pass this way.

NUBIAN.

Look round!
What sumless multitudes!—it seems as Memphis
Could never hive one-half their numbers.

EGYPTIAN.

They gather
From Thebes, and villages and cities round:
Thou see'st the various dresses of their tribes.

BABYLONIAN.

'Tis something more than curiosity
Hath drawn them thus together.

EGYPTIAN.

What mean'st thou?

BABYLONIAN.

Look—the armed force of Egypt is drawn out!
Marshalled as if for some world-winning battle,
On which the fate of empires hung:—all this
Is but to guard one man to death.

NUBIAN.

The proof
Of manifested fears of Amasis,
Which had been wiser hidden.

BABYLONIAN.

Yet they seem
Well founded, for these multitudes attest
The spirit of Prometheus lives amongst them.

EGYPTIAN.

Talk not so loud—hist! see the Herald passes.

HERALD.

If any raise their voices to support
Or to condemn the rebel, they shall be
Slain on the spot; so wills great Amasis,
Whom may the gods remember!

(Passes on.)

(Various groupes mount the pediment.)

BABYLONIAN.

So I trust:

Thou hear'st the proclamation taking from us
The use of our free tongues. How openly
Doth Amasis proclaim his fears! it were
More politic to have been merciful.
Let kings resemble Him whose name they bear,
And most in the sweet attribute of mercy.
He is the people's servant; if he gainsay,
He hath no calling.

AN AGED MEMPHIAN.

What a change is wrought
In popular opinion! Two brief days
Have scarce departed, when we gathered here,
And were the greatest nation on the earth,
For we were free: we felt so—heaven approved,
For it allowed the deed; our hearts confirmed it.
Now we throng here to see the very man,
Who made us men, impaled; yea, to look on
His agonies in silence, or applaud them:
So fickle is the wind of popular breath!
This mandate to restrain our tongues is wiser
Than they deem who command our hearts and voices.
We could not well applaud the king—or MAN,
That title suits him best—whom we forsook
So basely; and our tyrants would blush
If we insulted him.

EGYPTIAN.

Hark—listen to
The thunder of the shouting multitudes!

MEMPHIAN.

The Herald's word is set at nought, unless

They make, at once, a general massacre.
He hath just passed beneath the porch of Mœris:
When the great king built up that mighty work,
He deemed not thus his race would be dishonoured.

MEMPHIAN.

But where is Amasis? doth he not witness
The triumph o'er the rebel he so hates?

NUBIAN.

The king doth sit with ashes on his head:
The daughter of his love, sole hope, and heir,
Was, with the morn, found dead upon her couch.

MEMPHIAN.

So, Fortune never comes with both hands full.

EGYPTIAN.

Lo! he comes guarded in his car: his brow
Is paler that it was, but more composed:
It tells us he will die as he hath lived.

NUBIAN.

They bear him by the Pyramid where he
So lately stood the guardian of his country.
And now he waves his hand, and they obey
And stop.

MEMPHIAN.

Say, rather, they can not advance.
It would take hours to hew those masses through,
Even though they offered no resistance.

EGYPTIAN.

Look!

BABYLONIAN.

'Tis Seged! ho—he hears me not—he is
Clad in the ancient arms which have been hung
Above his hearth-stone fifty summers. Why
Doth the old man resume them now? Look where
He fiercely forces passage through the crowd!
Resolve sits on his brow; he meditates
Some deed——

MEMPHIAN.

Prometheus speaks!

PROMETHEUS *(in front of the Pyramids, surrounded with tripled guard and soldiery).*

Pause here awhile.

CHIEF PREFECT.

Thou shalt not speak the people.

PROMETHEUS.

I did not
Ask it; their constancy has been well proved:
I see it in their works before me now.
I talk to Egypt and eternity,
That shall exist together.
Oh, farewell
Thou lovely country and my own—farewell
Thou city of my fathers! and, thou Nile!
Who dost protect it, whom so oft I have blest
In love and gratitude, farewell—farewell!

O Earth! thou common mother of us all,
Take back again into thy infinite womb
This body which is thine! let my free breath
Melt in the winds that sweep above thy hills,
And animate the mountain wanderer there!
Let my soul's element of fire return
Back to its source, yon Sun, the altar-place
From whence it came; or be allied to Him,
The Unknown, of whom it is the symbol: or,
If I am formed but of the elements,
My immortal aspirations based on nothing,
My dust to be resolved to dust again,
May they unite once more their scattered seeds,
And form another human being—greater,
But blest with fates more fortunate than mine!
My great task now is done; my spirit takes
Its last flight from ye—my own country—blessing
Each haunt of thy loved region, soon to be
A waste of desolation. Yea, the hours
Are rapidly approaching, when the foe
Shall sweep o'er this defenceless land, and find
Not one stand up to guard her: then, when spoiled,
Her shrines and idols broken, she shall be
Ravaged by after-foes more merciless;
For she shall be a by-word to the earth
For sloth and impotence. The Nile shall roll
O'er Memphis, and become her sepulchre;
And none shall know where the proud city stood.
Her sons cannot be lowered more; but they
Shall become vagabonds upon the earth,
Without a home! The hand of industry
Shall sink inert, beholding in despair

Its produce swept before the growing waters,
Which shall sink Egypt's plains beneath the sands
As deep as are the Pyramids raised high;
That shall stand her eternal monuments,
Giving their lessons to the end of time!
Then—when their punishment is full; when they
Feel how their strength and hope is gone with freedom;
When they behold their country burning like
An altar-place, while they are dragged away,
Exiles for life—let them remember me!

CHIEF PREFECT.

Thou dost forget——

PROMETHEUS.

One moment's commune more,
And I have done: my heart will be relieved.
I feel but this one sole, intense desire,
A feverish hope, an indistinct belief,
But to blend with the Beautiful I see,
Be it on earth or heaven! or with the air,
Or with the rock—the mountain—or the sea—
Or breeze, or tempest, that endure for ever;
Or, oh! thou glorious Orb! that lookest on me
As if thou knew'st thy worshipper, whose soul
Hath been poured forth before thee with a love
Chaldéan never knew!—that art, perchance,
The altar of a God more infinite
Than Night, or the illimitable Heavens,—
I would be in thy fiery life absorbed,
Or world, or whatsoe'er thou art—so I

Endured, like thee, for ever!—one become,
Though all unconscious, with thy majesty
Men idolize while gazing on!
I am ready:
Is there here one of ye, the nearest round me,
Who will fulfil a promise made my brother,
And bear to him the signet-ring of Mœris?

SEGED *(rushing forward).*

King! I will to the death!

CHIEF PREFECT.

Ha! traitor—take it!

SEGED.

I thank thee! *(Dies.)*

PROMETHEUS.

Constant to the last!
(Shouts and clamours break, at once, from all parts of the multitude—a violent movement ensues towards the centre.)

CHIEF PREFECT *(to the guard).*

Ye slaves!
Despatch the sentence here—here on this spot!
Where he first broached his machinations. What?
See ye not how the crowds are rushing on us
In one dense mass! the soldiers will be crushed,
And mixed in one vast massacre!—Strike! ere
They come——

PROMETHEUS.

Ay—strike! I would not be profaned
By their accursèd hands! they have betrayed me,
And I will be their tool no more—the straw
Blown by the wind of their caprice! their shouts
I loathe—the fickle breath of wayward slaves,
Who sacrificed the heart that trusted them.
Slaves! do your office—quick—they come—strike home,
Rapid and deep! strike—trembling coward! deep,
As is the curse I leave them!

(While the guard are hesitating from the uproar around them, the Chief Prefect strikes his lance through Prometheus, who falls.)

THE GUARD *(exultingly).*

He is dead!
'Tis done—we conquer—we have vanquished him!

CHIEF PREFECT *(turning fiercely on them).*

Fools! look round ye—*he* triumphed as he died.

THE END.

NOTES.



NOTES.*

Note I.—Page 4, lines 29, 30.

. *"her high domes,*
And towers, and groves, all softened in the distance!"

Pliny speaks of Memphis as a wooded country, with such vast trees that three men could not embrace the trunk. "There are about Memphis," says Diodorus, "delightful fields, and lakes filled with aromatic reeds; and it is in this place the Egyptians, for the most part, bury their dead. And it is these corpses, which are brought over the lake Acheruska to the burying-place of the Egyptians, and are there deposited, that gave rise to all those fictions which the Greeks have raised concerning the infernal deities; hence the derivation, Acheron."

Note II.—Page 5, line 14.

"Tombs for dead kings."

Neither is there any universal consent among ancient authors for what use the Pyramids were designed. Pliny asserts they were built for ostentation, and to keep idle people in employment; others, and far more probable, that they were reared to be the sepulchres of Egyptian kings.†

* I have added a few Notes, chiefly extracts, to illustrate some allusions and localities in the Drama; it was thought unnecessary to mark them in the text.

† Lucan I. ix. 155., I. viii. 698. Strabo. Geogr. I. xvii., p. 461. Diod. Siculus lib. I. i., p. 40.

The great Pyramid was perhaps designed for a temple. A pyramid or oblelisk, *i.e.*, an equilateral, or an acute-angled triangle, with two equal sides, denoted the nature and element of fire;* but by a right-angled triangle was understood the nature and constitution of the universe; whereof the perpendicular expressed Osiris, or the male; the basis expressed Isis, or the female; and the hypothenuse expressed Horus, the air, or sensible world. The material, or elementary world, was represented by a square; each side (as in the Jewish tabernacle table) representing one quarter of it; the pyramids, or obelisks, were, doubtless, dedicated to the sun.—*Denon and Norden.*

NOTE III.—Page 5, lines 15, 16.

. *" the records*
Of baffled tyranny for ever buried."

In the time of Cambyses, the knowledge of the characters graved on the Pyramids was lost: we therefore may conjecture how far back it is necessary to place the epoch of their building. It cannot be disowned that they were built before any of the temples or palaces were raised, whose stupendous ruins are the wonders of the present day. It must likewise be agreed that the Pyramids were built long before any residence was established at Memphis, and even before that great city was founded. The reason is, because Memphis was in a great measure founded from the ruins of Thebes; which, according to our supposition, and on account of the hieroglyphics with which its edifices were adorned, must have been posterior to the Pyramids.—*Denon.*

NOTE IV.—Page 8, line 13.

" Did he raise Memphis from the water's bed?"

According to Muillet, there are at the bottom of the lake Mœris many ruins of pillars, obelisks, and buildings, to be seen still, when the overflowings of the Nile are not considerable enough to replenish the lake with water. In the year 1697, when the surface of the lake was five or six cubits lower than usual, it gave all spectators an opportunity of seeing the ruins of a vast city at the bottom of this immense reservoir.

NOTE V.—Page 8, lines 16, 17.

" The deep foundations of yon stream, that is
Immortalized even by the name of Mœris."

Menes, according to Herodotus, was the first king of Egypt;

+ Porphr. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang., p. 60.

" they add, that the same Menes, after he had diverted the course of the water, built the city which to this day is called Memphis, within the ancient bed of the river. On the north and west side he caused a lake to be made without the walls from the river, and founded the magnificent temple of Vulcan in the same city." And yet Diodorus positively asserts that Memphis was not built till eight generations after the building of Thebes; and that the rise of Memphis was the downfall of Thebes.

NOTE VI.—Page 9, line 2.

" For it will save his body from the vultures."

None of the kings who erected those Pyramids were buried in them; for the people were so incensed, both by the great pain and labour they endured in making those works, and by the tyranny and cruelty which the kings used towards them, that they tore their bodies in pieces, or cast them out of their monuments: so that some of them commanded their slaves to hide their bodies after death in some vile and obscure place, to the end they might thus avoid the fury and insolence of the people. It is calculated that 360,000 people wrought continually for the space of twenty years in building the great Pyramid.

NOTE VII.—Page 23, lines 20, 21.

" His lake of never-ebbing waters, where
He and his queen sit on their marble thrones."

" The king Miris, or Mœris, (he built in Memphis the porch, which is on the north side, a work surpassing all others,) when he caused the said lake to be made, left in the midst of it a high place, where he built his sepulchre, and erected there two pyramids, fifty and two fathoms high; one for himself, and the other for his wife; and on them caused two statues of stone to be placed seated on a throne; thinking by such works to render the memory of his virtuous deeds immortal."

As each of these accounts, when compared with the other, appears to be equally poetical in point of accuracy, I have adhered to the two last, which better suited my plan and purpose.

Herodotus says—" This wonderful lake, stretching from north to south, is, in its depth, two hundred cubits: it is wholly the produce of human industry; which, indeed, the work itself testifies; for in its centre may be seen two Pyramids, one of which is two hundred cubits above, and as many beneath, the water; on the summit of each is a colossal statue of marble in a sitting attitude."

NOTE VIII.—Page 46, lines 21, 22.

. *"Courage may defend a crown,—*
Infamy never!"

The grand reply of Napoleon, when pressed to abdicate, after the disastrous battle of Waterloo.

NOTE IX.—Page 60, lines 28, 29.

. *"What a man,*
What a hero!"

The unconscious exclamation of the celebrated Spartan king, Agesilaus, when he beheld Epaminondas, at the head of the Theban band, fording the river Eurotas, and in full march to attack his capital.

NOTE X.—Page 72, line 5.

"Dost raise thy Gorgon shield."

The anachronism should be acknowledged, the image being drawn from the Grecian mythology: it was, however, too forcible and just to be abandoned.

NOTE XI.—Page 76, line 23.

"The giant Tyranny."

The sublime passage in Lucretius, suggesting the image, will be recalled by the scholar.

NOTE XII.—Page 99, line 14.

"Beneath the brutes and monsters they adore."

The idols of the aborigines Egyptians were birds, beasts, and fishes, &c., which the Phœnicians and Grecians, when they came to inhabit Egypt, improved, by adding a man's head or body to them, and from hence their motley-formed deities,—of such a class was Dagon, &c. It seems strange that so learned a people could adopt so absurd a custom, &c.—*Bishop of Clogher.*

But Herodotus speaks warily, as if fearful of offending the priesthood—"But if I should take on me to give the reasons of these opinions, I must enter into a long discourse of divine things, which I avoid with all possible care."

Strabo asserts that the Egyptian temples had no images in them—that is, none of human form; only the image of some animal, which, emblematically, represented the object of their worship.

"The Egyptians did not worship the animals," says Plutarch, "but the divinity represented in them."

"The Egyptians," says Diodorus, "are not ashamed to confess the reverence they entertain for these creatures, but rather glory in it, considering themselves, thereby, as being more acceptable to the gods. I myself saw a woman cut to pieces for killing a rat."

NOTE XIII.—Page 104, line 2.

"A happier life than this."

The Egyptians are the first of mankind who asserted the immortality of the soul. They believe that, on the dissolution of the body, the soul immediately enters into another animal; and that, after using, as vehicles, every species of terrestrial, winged, and aquatic animals, it finally enters, a second time, into the human body. They affirm that it undergoes all these changes in the space of three thousand years.—*Herod.*, Euterpe, i. 362.

NOTE XIV.—Page 112, line 6.

"Let my soul's element of fire."

Might not the Egyptians originally have worshipped fire as symbolic of the ineffable One? The obelisks and pyramids, as Porphyry observes (Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang.), represent, by their shape, the pyramidal motion of flame, and they were dedicated to the sun. Let it also be noted that, among the ruins of Pars-abad, or Persepolis, the origin of which is lost in antiquity, are still to be seen figures adoring fire, surrounded by the various emblems of the winged globe, lotus leaves, &c., engraved in Egyptian architecture.

NOTE XV.—Page 112, line 9.

"The Unknown, of whom it is the symbol."

The Egyptians worshipped Τῷ πρωτῷ Θεῷ, the supreme Deity, and Athor, their Venus; or the material principle was an object of worship. Such also was the Adonai of the Syrians; the Melch or Moloch of the Scythians; the Zeus of the Greeks; and the Deus Optimus of the Romans. According to Herodotus, on a temple

dedicated to Mitha, at Suis, situated in Lower Egypt, was the following sublime inscription:

"I am whatever is—or has been—or will be—and no
Mortal has drawn aside my veil: my offspring is the sun."

What is this sublime inscription, but an acknowledgment of the great truth, known and felt—expressed in language worthy of its theme? According to Salt, &c., the *phonetic* name of this divinity was NEET or NΘ; her *symbolic* illustration, a human figure, with the head of a lion. The Egyptians, according to Damascius, used the epithet of a thrice-unknown darkness in their mystical invocations to the primeval deity.

The Egyptians believed that emanations from divinity were resident in parts of nature: hence arose the sun's worship as Osiris, Hammon, Horus; the moon as Isis, Bubastis, Buto, &c. Their doctrine of the immortality of the soul, passing through everlasting transmigrations, Pythagoras introduced into Greece.

NOTE XVI.—Page 112, line 10.

"If I am formed but of the elements."

The Egyptians held the world produced from chaos by the energy of an intelligent principle, and in it a continual tendency to dissolution. They conceived it underwent a periodical conflagration; after which all things are restored to their original form to pass through similar changes.

NOTE XVII.—Page 112, lines 20, 21.

"When the foe
Shall sweep o'er this defenceless land."

The first shock which Memphis received was from the Persians. Cambyses, having invaded Egypt, sent a herald to Memphis, to summon the inhabitants to surrender. The people, however, transported with rage, fell upon the herald, and tore him to pieces. Cambyses, having taken the city, caused ten times as many Egyptians of the first nobility as there had been of his people massacred to be publicly executed.

The splendour of Upper Egypt terminated with the invasion of Cambyses. He carried with him not only conquest, but destruction. His warfare was not with the people only, but with their palaces and temples. At a subsequent period, Memphis was also taken by Alexander. On the founding of Alexandria, Memphis lost the honour of being the metropolis of Egypt, and its further history

became so obscure, that little knowledge of it is preserved. "Is it not astonishing," says a celebrated traveller, "that the site of the ancient metropolis of Egypt, a city containing magnificent palaces and temples, which Art laboured to render eternal, should, at present, be subject of dispute among the learned?"

After Alexandria was built, becoming the chief mart for trade and navigation, and also the abode of the Egyptian kings, Memphis would naturally decline; and when the ramparts were neglected, the city would be destroyed, and its materials might be carried to Alexandria, &c. The city being levelled, and the Nile overflowing the old ruins, it may easily be accounted for how everything has been buried and lost.—*Norden.*

NOTE XVIII.—Page 112, lines 26, 27.

"The Nile shall roll
O'er Memphis, and become her sepulchre."

The reason why we find no remains of Memphis is from its being situated low, even in the very bed of the old river. Herodotus says that the river ran formerly along the side of the sandy hills of Lybia; but that this old channel was dried up by bending off the river with a rampart. "This bending of the hill, where the river is forced to flow, is kept up and repaired every year with strong ramparts by the Persians; for if it was suffered to be broken down, all Memphis would be in danger of being swallowed by the stream."

"There remain only at present shapeless ruins of broken columns of ruined obelisks, which are still discovered at the bottom of the lake when the increase of the Nile is too small to furnish it with its usual supply of water. This circumstance has twice happened during my seventeen years' consulship, particularly A.D. 1677, when the surface of the lake sank between eight and nine feet, and discovered *at the bottom of this vast reservoir a kind of city,* which excited the wonder and admiration of all beholders."—*Savary.*

NOTE XIX.—Page 113, lines 2, 3.

"Which shall sink Egypt's plains beneath the sands
As deep as are the Pyramids raised high."

Herodotus says that it was said by the Egyptians, and he declares it to be his own opinion, that the Delta was formerly covered with water, and that it was lately, as may be said, a new-discovered land. The opinion of Herodotus seems to confirm Homer, who places the

isle of Pharos a whole day's sail from Egypt. This was also the opinion of Aristotle and other naturalists—that Egypt is a gift of the Nile, which is ever increasing on it.

It is the opinion of philosophers and naturalists* that the Nile once covered the country, and that it spread itself from the Upper Egypt (*i. e.*, Said or Thebais) to the Lower: and that, upon the waters retiring, some places began to be inhabited; till, at length, the water beginning to flow off by degrees, the land was filled with cities and dwellings; Egypt was the gift of the Nile, for ever increasing on that it once covered.—*Pococke.*

NOTE XX.—Page 113, lines 4, 5.

. "*Eternal monuments,*
Giving their lessons to the end of time."

"Mankind," says a celebrated writer, "have justly reckoned these enormous masses of earth and stone among the wonders of the world; yet their use appears to us trivial, or unknown. The most probable opinion respecting the object of these vast edifices is that which combines the double use of the sepulchre and the temple, nothing being more common, in all nations, than to bury distinguished men in places consecrated by rites of divine worship."

Some writers have considered them as observatories—which is accusing the builders of absurdity, as the neighbouring rocks were far better adapted. Josephus ascribes them to his countrymen during their captivity. As sun-dials they would have failed. Shaw and Bryant considered them to be temples, and the stone chest a tank for holding water used for purification. Pauw considers the great Pyramid as the tomb of Osiris; but the greater number of writers, ancient and modern, believe Cheops to be the founder.

Another ingenious theory ascribes them to the Shepherd-Kings (to whom allusion is made in the early part of the Drama); a foreign pastoral nation, who oppressed Egypt in the early times of the Pharaohs. All this is merest conjecture: the utmost uncertainty exists in all that concerns these gigantic, unwieldy, and mysterious edifices. Their builders, origin, date, and purposes, are wholly lost in the night of ages.

When the French were at Thebes the whole army halted among them, and clapped their hands with delight. The mind of Napoleon seized at once the fortunate moment—"Soldiers! from the summits of those monuments forty ages are now beholding us!" After such an appeal, which the locality made sublime, what troops could fail? A single battle left him conqueror of Egypt.

* Aristot. Meteorol., lib. I. cap. xiv.

Pliny may or may *not* be right, when he rather petulantly calls them a foolish and useless ostentation of the wealth of the Egyptian kings:

"Regum pecuniæ otiosa ac stulta ostentatio"—

adding that, by a just punishment, their memory is buried in oblivion.

NOTE XXI.—Page 113, lines 9, 10.

. . . . *"while they are dragged away,*
Exiles for life—let them remember me!"

Diodorus inform us that Cambyses, son of Cyrus, conquered Egypt in the third year of the 73d Olympiad, when he pillaged the country and burnt the temples; the treasures of which the Persians carried off into Asia, where they led away with them the workmen and architects of Egypt, whom they caused to build the famous palace of Persepolis, of Susa, and of several other cities. If there be any vestiges of striking resemblance to Egyptian architecture in the ruins of Persepolis now (and they are covered with them, according to Buckingham), we may safely fix on this period for its construction, and by these captive workmen so brought away.

I connot terminate these few notes better than by extracting a passage from Belzoni, giving an account of his own sensations when walking along the shore of the lake Mœris. When I first read it, the lines of Lord Byron, in his poem of the Prophecy of Dante, forcibly occurred to me—

"Many are poets who have never penn'd
Their inspiration, and perchance the best;" &c.

"The land we were now in had anciently been cultivated, as there appeared many stumps of palm and other trees nearly petrified. I also observed the vine in great plenty. The scene here was beautiful; the silence of the night, the beams of the radiant moon shining on the still waters of the lake, the solitude of the place, the sight of our boat, the group of fishermen, the temple which bears the name of Charon, a little way off, put me in mind of the lake Acheron, the boat Baris, and the ferryman of the Styx. I perceived this was the very spot where the poets originated the fable of the passage of souls over the river of oblivion. Nothing could be more pleasing to my imagination than being so near the Elysium, perhaps on the very Elysium itself. I thought that the plants, which appeared nearly petrified, had been the very ones when the souls were enjoying the happiness of their purity. I was thus strolling along the banks of the lake in solitary musing, not unlike one of those wandering souls waiting its turn to the Styx, while my old Charon and his semi-denur

were preparing supper. I wish that I had been a poet, that I might sing in verse the beautiful ideas and sensations I felt on that occasion. I thought that night one of the happiest of my life, and myself out of the reach of evil mortals. Happy in the Elysian fields, I feared not the malice nor treacherous acts of envy, jealousy, spite, revenge, nor the thousand other snares of men. I merely forgot I was living, and I suppose, that had I continued in my ecstasy, I should have verified that these waters have the powers of oblivion."

NOTE XXII.—Page 114, line 3.

"Men idolize while gazing on!"

The worship of the Sun is the most ancient of the world. The Hebrew term for "east" signifies before; "west," behind; "south," the right; and "the north," obscure, or concealed. The three first of these terms denote the position of an adorer of the sun; the last describes the darkness with which the first inhabitants of the earth believed the northern part of the globe to be enveloped. Light was the type of the good, darkness of the evil Spirit. God had said unto Zoroaster, "My light is concealed under all that shines."* Hence that prophet's disciples turn towards the fire that burns upon its altar; and when in the open air towards the sun, as the noblest of all lights, and that by which God sheds his divine influence over the whole earth, perpetuating the works of his creation. The Arab Job, without thinking it necessary to inquire into the sources of his feelings, explains the philosophy of early idolatry in a few simple and beautiful words. "If," says he, "I gazed upon Orus (the sun) when he was shining, or upon Järêcha (the moon) when rising in her glory, and my heart went secretly after them, and my hand kissed my mouth, I should have denied the God that is above." The pious Arab here points to what the Easterns tell us is the most ancient religion in the world. This consisted in the belief of the eternity of the world, governed by a co-eternal Mind, whose symbol was fire. The apparent or material source of fire was the Sun, to which, as well as the Moon and Stars, as partakers of the same celestial nature, a proportioned reverence was due. The chief seat of this religion was in Haran, on the Chaldean border, where the grand temple of the Sabæans was on the top of a hill. The words Haranite and Sabæan came thus to be used as equivalent terms. We have now almost lost sight of the original tradition; and the revelations of the Deity are made to mankind through the stars "walking in brightness," and the various phenomena and influences of Nature.*

* Zend-a-vesta.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THESE Pieces of Poetry were written at a period when the eyes of Europe were turned on Poland, then making—certainly not her last, but let us hope rather, her penultimate struggle for her liberties. I thought to suppress them, the events being passed; but this was an unworthy reflection, for the subject of the wrongs and oppressions of humanity must be ever stirring and ever new, finding an answer back from every healthy heart, while there remains one kingdom on the earth under oppression, and one subject who feels himself a slave.

THE VOICE OF POLAND TO EUROPE.

I.

MUST we again be trampled to the dust,
Crushed beneath Tyranny's gigantic tread?
Nations of Europe—hear!—ye shall—ye must!
Ye have stood by and watched us while we bled,
Nor raised a hand, nor mourned our heroes dead;
Will ye now look on, and our struggles mock?
Lo, Liberty hath burst her bonds of lead;
Her arm is raised, her throne is on the rock;
She stamps upon her chains, and earth hath felt the shock.

II.

And chiefly thou, high France! who standest now
Prouder than Rome when crowned with loftiest bays!
Will Freedom's wreath be shaken from thy brow,
Or stained, in stooping from thy height to raise
Those who have basked within its sunlike rays,
Until they felt they, too, were men once more,
Who dared to emulate thy glorious days;
And wash their wrongs out in their tyrants' gore,
Or perish in the field—crushed down for evermore?

III.

Spirit of Kosciusko! rouse—awake
From thy long sleep, and look upon our deeds:
Our hearts no more can bend, but they shall break;
We may be scattered by the shock like weeds
On the surf-beaten shore,—but still succeeds
The tide until it reach its fated height;
Never in vain the heart of freeman bleeds!
Blood may be shed like water in the fight,
Mankind awakes at last, and vindicates the right!

IV.

And thou, to whom our cries in vain ascended
From Prague's red bridge, from Warsaw's fiery wall!
O God of Freedom! if our crimes offended,
And made Thee, then, insensate to our call,
Are we not *now* more sinned against? Then fall
Thy lightnings on them, scorching like a scroll!
And let the nations who behold our thrall
Prove in their turn the tyrant's worst controul:
Oh, let them feel the iron entering in the soul!

SENTIMENTS OF A NOBLE POLE.

WHY should we shrink? say, what have we to lose?—
Our lives?—why, what are they in the great scale,
When weighed with liberty? We can not fail.
Power, and the arm of tyranny subdues,
Ay, doth annihilate; but still we choose
The bright path left, while nobly we depart,
The unconquered lords of our own destiny!
Is it not better thus to greatly die,
Than live, and wear the fetters of the heart?
So deemed the Spartan at Thermopylæ:
So the free Switzer on his hills, when fell
The Austrian's pride beneath the shaft of Tell!
Have we not matched them, glorious as they were?
Have *we* not proved what courage and despair
Can do when plunging in the desperate strife?
Look on our wrongs, avenging Heaven!—we swear
Never to yield our weapons but with life;
Our challenge word is war—"war, even to the *knife.*"*

REFLECTIONS OF THE POLISH PEASANT.

YES—they are coming!—all is now at stake:
The storm is gathering round us, and we hear,
With anxious minds, yet all distinct from fear,
The thunder in the distance! It will break—
And we shall see our frail huts blaze afar,
Our fields ploughed up with guns and shattering shells,

* The never-to-be-forgotten answer of Palafox at the seige of Zaragoza, on receiving his final summons to surrender.

Our covert haunts, where peace and blessing dwells,
Blasted by the volcanic breath of War!
This we could bear like men; but we have wives
And infant children! What will be their fate?
Oh, this subdues our hearts when most elate!
We give our country what we owe—our lives:
But who will shelter them when we are dead?—
Who strike to earth the cowards that dare shed
The blood of unprotected woman?—GOD!
To HIM do we commit them: they will see,
Perchance, the very battle-field where we
Lie cold and mangled on the bloody sod,
Feeling *their* sufferings no more! But when
Freedom is won,—Hope tells us that again
Her ark shall ride triumphant o'er the flood,—
Then will *they* lead our children to the spot,
And point our graves, and say, with saddening thought,
"Here sleep the brave who bought it with their blood."

FEELINGS OF THE HIGH-MINDED POLISH SOLDIER, ON THE AUTOCRAT'S MANIFESTO.

AY, let him threat—we laugh his threats to scorn!
They are our exultation and our pride,
The proof of fears which vainly he would hide.
Such miserable shifts are ever born
From tyranny and impotence. But when
He dares to tell us that we are *misled;*
Of *benefits* that we have reaped instead

Of wrongs;—that we are blest beneath his yoke;—
That we are *his* by right of conquest;—*then*,
We feel his power in our souls!—that stroke
Is more than we can bear!—the blush of shame
Mantles our cheeks; we think of what we *were*,
And *are*, and for a moment could despair.
But a revulsion comes,—the indignant flame
Of vengeance swells our bosoms,—Liberty
Fills us with inspiration; and we feel,
While firmer in our hands we grasp the steel,
That we can shield ourselves from infamy,
That the great hour is come to conquer or to die!

THOUGHTS ON THE POLISH MANIFESTO.

> "As if the annals of the world had not taught that, even after an interval of ages, nations reduced to foreign subjection did not always recover that independence which had been destined for them by the Creator from the beginning of time."—*Extract from the Polish Manifesto.*

Yes! that great truth, descended from high Heaven,
Speaks like the awful voice of prophecy!
It cometh from the shadows of the past,
And hath its echo in futurity!—
A faith by God himself to virtue given,
That time, and wreck, and Nature shall outlast.
Behold the principle innate in man,
Like life renewed, and manifest by this;—
Tyrants have risen since the world began,
And prostrated whole empires in the abyss
Of ruin, leaving, like the blasting wind,

Silence, and death, and solitude, behind!
But, when recovering their exhausted strength,
Have they not ever rallied? and at length
Strangled their sleeping conquerors?——Look back,
Through the long vistas of Time's wasted track!
Over the wrecks of states in ruin hurled;
Think of the ancient kingdoms of the world
Whose very shadows are departed!—how
Their equal fate doth this great truth avow!
They warred against each other, and they fell,
Swallowed and lost in the receptacle
Of Rome the eternal; until she—even she—
As if to show the mockery of power,
Like a spent wrestler, in his weaker hour,
Bowed down her stately head to destiny!
What restless spirit, then, is this that works
Among the human race? which, if it lurks
Awhile 'midst ashes, only hides its path,
Till it can burst forth in volcanic wrath,
Conquering or self-destroying?—Liberty!
The feeling kindled through the man when God
Breathed in his form, and raised it from the sod:
Then did He utter His sublime decree,
That changeless—deathless—shall for ever be!—
"I make him of the elements; his mind
Shall be like them, resembling Deity,
Ever advancing to his bounds assigned;
Even as the changeless waters unconfined;
And, like the winds, pure, vigorous, strong, and free!"

THE RECORD OF THE NATIONS.

Oh! for a pyramid whose height were heaven!
Where never mist nor cloud might intervene;
The ray that settling there should dwell serene,
Tranquil, and fixed; such radiance as is given
To Andes' brow while sleeps the twilight there,
When men look upward through the fields of air
From their dim earth, and see with doubtful sight,
Standing between the ancient day and night,
The shapeless Giant in his clouds!—There I
Would trace in starry characters, for all
To read like God's handwriting on the wall,
And feel their heart of hearts within reply,
To these great truths, recorded there on high:—
"Ye are all brethren, of whatever shade,
Or clime, or station: whether ye degrade
Yourselves to passions or brute slavery,
Great Nature made ye equal; it is ye
Have prostrated yourselves; and lord, and slave,
Are words that brand your ignorance, and show
That ye are yet in infancy—for, oh!
Will ye not share the gift the Eternal gave,
Which ye the stronger have preserved and won?
Will ye go on thus ever, and behold
Your brethren portioned out like sheep, and sold
Or slaughtered by the impotence of *one?*
Wake from your sloth and feel this truth sublime,
The voice of Reason echoed back by Time:—
All warring interests of states will cease,
All petty rivalships be hushed in peace;
All private piques of harlots and of kings,

Unknown, or talked of as forgotten things;
And arts, and arms, and mutual interchange,
Be free and boundless as the ocean's range;
When the broad charter of the freeman's right
Is blazoned forth to every common sight,
And appealed to for safety by the oppressed;
When ye in concord join and are at rest,
Like parted brethren meet, and with clasped hands unite!"

ANTICIPATION.

Trust not, high-minded men! to your great cause;
Or think that Virtue's idol, ye set up,
Will aid ye: men have dregged her bitter cup
Too deep to trust in her capricious laws.
She is the phantom of our heated hopes,
The embodying of the immortal soul's desires,
Shaping the godlike forth which it aspires!
A shade that never against Fortune copes,
But lives and dies within her sunny hour,
And, crumbling, sinks beneath the touch of power.
So hath it ever been since time began:
So felt the godlike Roman,* who upheld
The noblest cause that ever called on man;
And, oh! how many ardent hearts have swelled,
And owned the melancholy truth too late,
Leaving the shrine they worshipped desolate!
No—it is Power that man bows down to!—Strength
Made the first law;—who dreads the writhing length

* Marcus Brutus.

Of the crushed snake—who starts not from his sting?
Self-reverent Virtue to the strong must yield:
Kneel to her still—but kneel with spear and shield!
Then, when to all the world ye have proclaimed,
And proved in fight, her high supremacy,
O'er your red swords the wreath of myrtle fling!*
And raise her up, with all her spoils reclaimed,
Upon the pedestal of Liberty!
Oh! how exalted must that triumph be,
When the dead share the highest praise!—when we
Feel in their deaths a deep, a sacred joy,
An envy, but without its base alloy!—
A high enthusiasm, and a pride
In those stern martyrs who have sanctified
The faith for which they gloriously died!
And what if the survivors fail? have they
Aught to regret—did they their cause betray?
Or shall they fail to meet their great reward?—
Doth there not look on them from high a God,
In whose pure eyes "the attempt and not the deed"
Is judged?—with whom all virtue doth succeed?
Yes! they are judged alike in earth and heaven!—
There—they shall join their brethren gone before;
Here—their great names shall be to memory given,
To live among the great—the good—for evermore!

* Εν μυρτε κλαδι τω ξιφος φορησω, &c.—*Alcæus' Hymn.*

TO THE POLISH PATRIOTS.

Mountains and crags are Freedom's citadels;
Which never harboured yet a human slave,
Where never tyrant climbed but found his grave!
Bulwarks of Nature are they, where she dwells,
And only her eternal gates doth throw
Open to freemen struggling 'gainst their foe,
When all is lost but courage and despair!
And it may be her will to shew him there
Her lessons of resistance;—that stern will
And pride, whose base is honour; and that sense
Of inward duty and self-reverence,
Standing oak-like, though rent—unstooping still!
But shall man trust in rocks, and hide behind
Nature's defences, when he should come forth,
Strong in his country's hopes and native worth,
And chase his foes as chaff before the wind?
The soldier's confidence is in his pride!
Oh! let him rather gallantly confide
In that fixed bulwark—the unconquered soul!
Who ever saw in flight the fiery Pole?
This is your trust—and not in crag or glen;
But, like old Sparta, with her wall of men,
Ye call on open Nature and on Heaven
To see your right hands guard the blessings they have given!

And, oh! forget not, though of later date,
How Zaragoza conquered even Fate:
War rent her streets asunder—crushing round,
As from a whirlwind; fire upheaved the ground
With an earthquake convulsion; one by one

Her ruins fell; pale Famine in her den
Gorged her own life—diseases racked:—Yet then
Their frantic struggles only were begun!
It was a strife of mortal agony:
Such are the sacrifices that atone,
And purify those souls that will not die!
Had she *not* done this she had been unknown:
What hath she *now* gained?—a deep memory,
As everlasting as the solid earth!
Their bones are dried, their names and place forgot,
And yet how blest and envied is their lot!
What recks it now their life, or place of birth?
They are immortal, raised among the just:
Virtue, like God, re-animates the dust!
Unfold YOUR records—what have ye to tell?
Why, your great ancestry the deeds have done
To which these melt as vapours in the sun!
What is a city stormed, but unsubdued?
"A debt immense of endless gratitude"*
The West doth owe ye—they repay you well!
Tell them that when the conquering Infidel,
On Austria's fields, a wasting whirlwind came;—
When, weakened with her petty feuds, she closed
Her gates in terror, and none interposed
To save her life, and faith, yea, very name;—
Then, young in vigour, flushed with martial wrath,
Alone great SOBIESKI dared stand forth,
The forlorn hope of Europe! who looked on,
Listening the dreadful onset; who knows not
The martial deeds the fiery Pole then wrought?

* Milton.

Morn saw the fight, and day the battle won!
In dust the Paynim's power for ever hurled,
And Poland hailed the saviour of the world!*

THE INTERVAL.

THE trumpet's pealed—thy challenge is abroad:
And on the arena thou stand'st forth alone,
Singly to meet force triple to thine own.
And those who might have aided thee are awed
By fear, or, swayed by envy, hope thy fall,—
Thou, who wert guardian once, yea, lord of all!
But at thy right hand standeth Fortitude,
The eldest-born of Virtue, and fixed Hope,
Breathing strength in thee with the world to cope;
And Freedom girds thy sword, and points the wreath,
Crown of the brave in triumph or in death!
Thou art a spectacle sublime and high!
The sages dreamed of old that from the sky
The god himself looked down to see the great,
The good man struggling with the storms of fate!
Will not some guardian Influence watch o'er thee,
Devoted Poland?—Is *thy* virtue less?
Remember—never yet was liberty
Twice struggled for and lost!—the restlessness
Of the mute bondsman is the gnawing file
That forges fetters into arms!—the mind

* Prussia, formerly in a state of vassalage to Poland, was only recognised as a kingdom in 1764. Russia, in the 17th century, saw her capital and throne possessed by the Poles; and Austria, in 1683, was indebted to a king of Poland (Sobieski) for the preservation of her metropolis, and for her very existence.

Must die at once—but cannot be declined
To that brute, vacant, stagnant listlessness,
When even Despair is wrinkled to a smile!
Yes! there are Powers will work for thee on earth,
And air, and in the metropolitan
Feelings and hopes in the vast heart of man.
Oh! could they, centering, spring at once to birth,—
Like lightning from the many clouds,—how soon
Would thy barbarians on the earth be strewn,
Like snow-drift on their barren hills! That day
Is dawning now: the past and present are
Voices of prophecy, and point the star
That heralds in the morn. Then fears away!
If ye be martyrs, ye will close the band:
The great cause is confirmed that hath been bought
With blood of millions:—think what *ye* have wrought,
And to the latest dyke your foe withstand!
And when, hereafter, by the household hearth,
Your sons shall drink, in their exulting mirth,
To your long line of chiefs and patriots past,
Then let them say—"The bravest were the last!"

VICTORY IN DEFEAT.

Oh, for a trumpet-voice that could be heard
Throughout posterity!—a thunder-tone
That, with the winds unfettered, should be blown
Where'er oppressed Humanity preferred
Its cause to over-watching Heaven—each word
Palpably seen as lightning by the eye,

And felt within the bosom—to proclaim
How the brave fight who fight for liberty!
How their files rush, a mass of serried flame,
Against o'erwhelming hosts—there buried, like
The thunder, falling as it ceased to strike!
How o'er their bands the red artillery broke,
Crushing the strength they could not overcome;
Till the spent shot—the last despairing stroke—
The banners hurled to earth—the muffled drum—
Told all was o'er! Such records wherefore tell?
Do not their memories in men's bosoms dwell,
Till of their being they become a part,
Incorporate with each life-pulse of the heart?
Ages have fled, yet still fresh palms hath won
Thy deathless name, immortal Marathon!
And doth not still the boy's young cheek flush high,
When first his spirit *feels* Thermopylæ!
The spirit of the man in him begun,
The freeman's sense of liberty confessed,
Then kindled first to life within his breast,
Eternally transfused from sire to son:
The inalienate right by Justice made,
And honour's law by patriotism swayed.
Have *we* not heroes, too, of later time?
The Wallace wight—the Hofer—and the Tell?
Claims not each age its deathless oracle?
Yea, in the universe' quick heart doth dwell
The eternal truth—the soul of man replies—
That he doth share her chartered liberties.
And who hath stood amidst her band sublime
Higher than thou, great Kosciusko!—thou
Didst wake the fire that lives among us now!

Oh! hadst thou found but Sparta's wall of men,
Thou hadst raised Poland from the dust again;
And Freedom upon earth to thee had given
The crown of martyrs ratified in heaven!
Strength rests but with the many: never yet
Was Freedom's standard reared but by the few,
The watching men who woke while others slept;
Who, like the night-storm, on the oppressors swept,
Till the mass rose, and, wolf-like, on them flew,
Freedom their rally-word, while Vengeance slew!

Heroes—but martyrs—have ye ever been;
To point the goal—the prize ye could not win:
Ye left behind but earthly memories;
But doth not GOD, from his inscrutable place,
Look on the hearts who for their country die,
The glorious martyrs of Humanity?
Shall they pass, cloud-like, here, and leave no trace?
Shall nought be done for them on earth or skies?—
Unchangeable is Nature and her laws:
The miracles are by your valour wrought,
The ever-living and the unforgot;
For HE hath fixed in human memory
The veneration for them, and the love,
And imitative faculty, that strove
To be like them who won the world's applause.
Great is the work ye greatly have begun!
Most in defeat your victory was won:
For ye have left, in Ostrolenka's name,
The memory of an heroic strife;
Such as old heroes fought, who felt that life
Was deathless honour—sanctified by fame!

RECORD OF A HAPPY DAY.

I.

We climbed the grassy steep to see her seat
Of childhood's days,
Where those three wild and withered fir-trees meet:
The sun's last rays,

II.

Mellowed and softened, shone o'er that waste plain,
As if he mourned
That our brief day was past—as he in vain
Would have returned!

III.

But now the time, the hour, had entered in us,
The quiet spot!
Meek Evening, like an angel, came to win us
From griefs forgot;—

IV.

From musings sweet, yet sad, whose very sadness
Is sweetest joy:
For, oh! what wassail hour of rudest gladness
Hath not alloy?

V.

We sat together by the silent river,
And heard the note
Of birds, and saw o'er us the aspens quiver;
The light leaves float

VI.

Upon the current, borne on—on—until

They rose no more;
And then we sighed, and felt the moral thrill
To our hearts' core.

VII.

The current of our days thus ever gliding;
And we, borne on,
Impulses, not our own, our pathway guiding,
Till life be gone.

VIII.

But then we felt how good and ill are blended:
And thanks were given;
Feeling though life upon a thread suspended,
It hung from Heaven!

IX.

And now meek Evening, beautiful and holy,
Presiding there,
Chased from my eyes away the melancholy,
From hers—the tear!

X.

We felt that blessed hour of Nature's love,
Our type of life:
Quiet and tranquil, thus, removed above
The world's far strife.

XI.

All lovely forms within our hearts were dwelling
As in a shrine:
The happiness within *her* bosom dwelling,
Was felt by mine!

THOUGHTS BEFORE RAFFAELLE'S PORTRAIT OF THE FORNARINA.

ETERNAL power of Beauty! how the soul
Sinks in the worship of thy nameless spell!
Would in thy shrine there dwelt an oracle,
The yearning questions that we ask to tell.
Dwell'st thou within the magic of the whole
We gaze on, filling the entrancèd heart?
Or in some nameless grace of form apart,
That thrills upon our being's chords till we
Become a portion of the harmony
And beauty which we dwell upon? Is 't drawn
From eyes?—those deep mysterious orbs, within
Whose dark or azure depths spells lie that win
Our very spirits from us as we gaze?—
Or in the silken tangles of the hair,
Wreathing the o'ershadowed brow with sun-like rays,
Is the chained soul imprisoned? or the air,
The expression of the voice in music borne
From the heart-breathing lips?—or claim thy spells
The bosom where Love born and cradled dwells?

II.

No marvel shrines to thee of old were given;
And that men peopled streams, hills, woods, with thee,
Yea, knelt and worshipped thy divinity
Far above all the fabled hosts of heaven!
They felt thee life's sole fount of happiness:
Kings prostrated before thy shrine were less
Than their own slaves; stern conquerors owned thy darts,
And lost their fame, and felt their mighty hearts
Faint, and their eyes grow dim before the power

Of all-absorbing Beauty! limners drew
Thy hues, and sculptors dared thy form renew:
Vain!—as if hues as fading as the hour,
Cold stone, or colder words, could hope to tell
Thy soul—thy life—thy power ineffable!

LINES IN VERSAILLES FOREST: TO THE LADY A———.

Come to the forest now the sun is high,
And the leaves dancing to the autumn wind!
While gladness lives in the pure air and sky;
While the sun sheds his glinting rays declined
Through the long vistas green, with boughs entwined,
Where the delighted eye no end can see;
While the quick fancy images behind
Glades greener than e'er bloomed in Arcady!
Nooks of red leafiness—wild heaths more bright
Even than those coverts rich with tinted light!
Where the eye, through the long-drawn aisles of trees,
The mellowing lustre of the sun's rays sees,
Through openings like gothic casements, cast
On the ground tints too glorious to last;
A dim religious light!—which the rapt eye
Dwells on and blesses in its ecstacy;
Each hue a feeling, entering the heart,
Till of the scene itself becomes a part!
Now, while yon sun a warmer ray is shedding
O'er each red branch with fading glory crowned;
Now, while each regal tree is, king-like, shedding

Its paradise of leaves upon the ground;
Now, while the wind sighs like a thing that grieves—
Music most sad yet sweet among the leaves;
Now, while glad Nature laughs o'er land and lea;
While thy first spring of youth returns to thee;—
Come thou, and walk the forest glades with me!

ON THE FIRST SIGHT OF MARTIN'S PICTURE OF THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

Poets have lived among us, great and free;
Men whose vast minds embraced infinity;
And, when their hearts with inspiration swelled,
They spoke—and told us all that they beheld:
Their words are colours that shall not decay,
And imagings which cannot pass away.
The voice, high painter! was denied to thee;
The vision only given,—that could see
All—yea, and more than they have told; hadst thou
The tongue accorded—language to avow
All thou hast pictured to us of sublime,
Of life—of death—of wreck—of space—and time;
Those who have loftiest seats around Fame's shrine,
Thou voiceless bard! had yielded place to thine.

INTUITIONS OF SPRING.

"In Nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read."—*Shakespeare.*

I.

I'have watched, all eye and ear, and in the ocean
Of the deep-blue and lumineferous air,
Or, on the face of the eternal earth,
There is no sound, nor breath, nor visible motion.
Like monumental effigies rise there
The living trees; the dark firs' solemn green,
The leafless twigs, not feeling yet the birth
Of the life rising in their veins unseen,
Drawn from their mother's infinite teeming breast.
The birds are silent, or in sleep, or living,
Like the still trees, in yon inspiring sun,
Who, from his central temple in the sky,
Doth look the fount of immortality
He is: to life its pulse and motion giving,
Yea, its creation from eternity:
All—all is happiness or grief repressed,
Wearing the forms of gladness or of rest.

II.

My spirit opens, too, unconsciously:
And, for a moment, with its inner eye
Doth read the intense harmonies round me now—
Truths from abstraction's inmost vision won;
Glimpses which Nature gives and then withdraws:
As if to seek her secrets she impelled

The souls that worshipped her; and then withheld,
Lest they should read too deeply of her laws.
In the sharp boughs, against the sky defined,
I hear the Œolian strings that meet the wind
Of Nature's ancient harp of melody!
My own immortal spirit is a string
To the great impulse of life vibrating,
Opening itself in thankfulness and love,
To God within me—round me—and above!
The giant Earth, with all its infinite life,
The living parts of one eternal Whole,
Pervaded by one interfusing Soul,*
With which each flower, each blade of grass, is rife,†
Slumbers before me: her broad, sun-basked brow
Is motionless; and yet she doth not sleep,
Sunk in a dreamless torpor, in which sense,
Life, energy, is merged in one intense
Vision—a musing contemplation deep;‡
Lulled by the music of the winds that keep
In her ears everlasting lullaby!

III.

And, as our souls, absorbed in reverie,
Rest without thought, or sense, or consciousness,

* Spiritus intus alit: totosque *infusa* per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.—*Virgil.*

So also St. Paul—"Do I not fill heaven and earth?"

† *ἀντὸν πάντα κοσμεῖν τὰ πράφματα διὰ παντων λοντά.—Plato.*

‡ "If any one," says Plotinus, "will attribute apprehension or sense to Nature, it must not be such as is in animals, but something that differs as much from it as the sense or cogitation of one in profound sleep differs from that of one who is awake."

Holding, but exercising not, the powers,
Consciously proving in its wakeful hours:
Even so is Nature—such doth she possess;
Such is she now, absorbed in thankfulness.
A silent spectacle herself; a dream
Of contemplation and of peace supreme!*
The idea of the Ineffable revealed:
Seen only by the poet, Nature's priest,
Presiding at her sacramental feast,
From uninitiated eyes concealed.
So doth she move on silently through space,
Light and shade chequering o'er her passive face:
While her vast forehead, turning to yon fire,
Feels the enkindling warmth it doth inspire:
And, it may be, revolving round the flame,
Doth with it indistinct remembrance claim,
A glimmering knowledge that from thence she came!

ON A BEAUTIFUL CHILD SLEEPING:

ROSE P——.

I.

O thou love of loves! thou sleepest;
Life's world is shut out from thee,
And what carest thou? thou reapest
Gladness of thine own, and keepest
In thy heart thy jubilee:
Silent I, at last, have found thee;
Sleep hath cast her mantle round thee!

* Plotinus calls this idea of Nature Θέαμα Θεώρημα, a spectacle and contemplation, as likewise the energy of Nature towards it, Θεωρία ἄψοφος, a silent contemplation; he allows that Nature may be said to be, in a certain sense, Φιλοθεάμων, a lover of spectacles or contemplation.

II.

And how beautiful art thou,
Nestling in thy golden rest!
Thy rich ringlets veil thy brow;
Thy clasped hands are folded now
Carelessly on thy white breast:
While those rosy lips, apart,
Tell the quick beatings of thy heart!

III.

What dream now o'er thee holds power?—
Oh! that I could, entering
Thy soul, pure as a young flower,
Hide me there, as in a bower,
'Mid fresh leaves and blossoming:
But that wish will bless me never;
Time has closed youth's gates for ever!

IV.

Dost thou, sweetest, gather roses
Beneath some transparent sky?
Where heaven o'er thy head uncloses,
And a cherub face discloses,
Beckoning thee to mount on high;
While thou sigh'st for wings to bear
Thee to meet that angel there!

V.

Ah, no! gladness now has taken
Thy light bosom for its home:
Dimples round thy lips awaken;
Thou art not in sleep forsaken,

Over flowrets thou dost roam;
While thy mother, laughing there,
Braids them in thy dark brown hair.

VI.

Yes—thy fragrant lips are parted;
Thou hast gained thy little will:
Like the butterfly, light-hearted,
Thou in sport from her hast darted:—
Dream on, and be happy still:
Oh! that thy life pure may be
As the joy thou giv'st to me!

1827.

ON THE SHORE OF THE ADRIATIC: BETWEEN RIMINI AND RAVENNA.

"Fractisque rauci fluctibus Adriæ."—*Horace.*

I.

A wild and stormy twilight: yea, a scene
For memory to recal that such hath been,
When thou, dark Adriatic shore! shalt seem
In the far past the vision of a dream.
Like a black canopy outspread, the sky,
Fell type of a remorseless destiny,
Frowns lowering along the horizon's line,
Where the foam, breaking o'er the leaden brine,
Gleams like the sea-mew's wing! the coming waves,
Silently opening like yawning graves,
Break heavily, and with a hollow roar
Recoil, wild sweeping down the pebbled shore.*

* Βη δ' ἀκέων παρὰ δίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλασσης.—*Homer.*

The clouds scud hurriedly along: one break
Dyes the red west—a sullen, fiery streak,
Such as o'erlooked the Deluge—it is past,
And heaven and earth alike are overcast.
A lowering darkness buries all, save where
The wind sweeps snow-flakes from old Ocean's hair,
Or when the breakers' foam beneath the night
Spreads o'er the sands broad sheets of flashing light,
Then vanishing in the deep as in a shroud,
Or Lightning buried in its thunder-cloud!

II.

My spirit rises to the element:
I stand where this huge rock frowns imminent,
Like a stern tower by man and life forsook,
And draw from it the strength that it doth look,
On its concentered base immoveable;
So would I gather emulating will
To rise above the petty ills of life,
The slights with which we wage unworthy strife:
Conscious, and strengthening in hope, that I
May leave the records that shall time defy:
Like thee, impassive rock! that art the same,
Unchanged by tempests or the lightning's flame;
That dost still rise abrupt against the sky,
In thy grey, unadorned sublimity:
Fixing the passing eye that doth behold,
Lone, ponderous, solemn, silent, dark, and cold.

FINIS.

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